

THE SAR'IM CHRONICLES

BOOK 1: THE EMPYREAN WAR



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THE SAR'IM CHRONICLES

Volume I: THE BOOKS OF WAR

Book1: THE EMPYREAN WAR

INSPIRED BY GAD'S HOLY SPIRIT



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THE EMPYREAN WAR

INTRODUCTION

The Sar'im Chronicles is the title given to a series of books that will be divided into five distinct volumes. The first of these, *The Books of War*, contains three books that deal primarily with the theme of the eternal conflict between the powers of angels and demons. *The Books of War* set forth the history of this conflict, from its origin until it became fully manifest on Earth, bearing not only on the spiritual characters that are its principle players, but also the humans who are caught in the middle.

Volume 2: The Books of Conflict, deal with the theme on a more personal level. Gone are the grandiose battles that take place in the Heavenly Kingdom, above the Ark, at the Tower of Babel. The three books that fall under this heading show how individual characters, such as Abraham and Moses, deal with the spiritual world and its factors, and they reveal the fact that individual choices have a great impact on the history of our world.

The third and fourth volumes, likewise, present unique viewpoints to the spiritual controversy, but the fifth volume is unique even among these. *Volume 5: The Books of Ages* present disjoint episodes from the history of the warfare, nevertheless they hang together on the central idea that Yahshua the Messiah (Jesus the Christ) was ordained from the foundation of the world to present Himself as a Sacrifice for fallen man. This eternal truth has had an impact both before and after the incident actually occurred, and the age in which men are living matters not nearly as much as the quality of that man's character as it relates to the divine purpose.

— David Aguilar

THE EMPYREAN WAR

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Here is a list of the major individuals who are mentioned within this book:

Adonaim, The Seven Archangels
(Guardians of the Shekinah – The Residence)

Michael – “Who is like El” (Cherub)
Lucifer – [Azazel/Satan] “Lightbearer” (Cherub)
Raphael – “Healing of El” (Virtue)
Phaniel – “Face of El” (Throne)
Sarakiel – “Prince of El” (Seraph)
Raguel – “Ally of El”(Principality)
Camael – “He who sees El” (Power)

Seraphim (Blazing Ones)

Israfel – “The Burning of El”
Jehoel – “Mediator of El”
Hadarniel – “Benevolence of El”
Petahel – “Impulse of El”
Kemuel – “Assembly of El”

Cherubim (Near Ones)

Gabriel – “Strength of El”
Za’afiel – “Wrath of El”
Sh’fiel – “Spy of El”
Puriel – “Flame of El”
Azrael – “Helped by El”
Gadriel – “My Helper is El”
Turel – [Abaddon] “Rock of El”/”Destroyer”
Zephon – “Looking out”

Ophanim (Thrones)

Raziel – “Mystery of El”
Zadkiel – “Righteousness of El”
Zagzagel – “Splendor of El”

Ikari'im (Principalities)

Cerviel – “Arm of El”
Anael – “Glory of El”
Ithuriel – “Discovery of El”

Ko'achim (Powers)

Typhon – [Sammael] “Northern Darkness”/”Poison of El”
Lahatiel – “Burning of El”
Andiriron – “Might”

Malakim (Virtues)

Uzziel – “Strength of El”
Lasetiel – “Bearing with El”
Adriel – “My Help is El”

Hashmallim (Dominions/Dominations)

Zahariel – “Brightness of El”
Matmoniel – “Minister of El”
Kafziel – “Speed of El”

THE EMPYREAN WAR

CHAPTER 1 – THE TRAGIC PRINCE

Fear not.

You may call me *Za'afiel*, and I am sent with a message for you and yours. My testimony contains many issues of which you need to be aware, for they relate directly to the unfolding of these last few days before all is complete. I am sure you know that there has been a war going on for some time. The actual conflict is passed, thank IaH, but much controversy remains, and the time has come for your people to take their last, decisive stand.

You noticed that I veiled my face when I spoke that Name. Yes, it is the Name of highest reverence, even for myself, one of the highest Querubim – which your human writers have often spelled “C-H-E-R-U-B-I-M,” but the “Ch” is a harder sound than this implies, like a “K” or a “Qu.”

But you thought angels had wings? Why, you are looking at them now. Notice that this “white garment” is actually composed of feathers, interlaced and held together. Watch as I unfold them ever so slightly, so...

We Cherubim have two wings, so when we are “clothed” we appear as ordinary men, unless we actually wear other apparel – be it armor or robe. The order just above us, the Seraphim, or “Burning Ones” have six, so while they may keep two folded over themselves, they have four remaining visible. The order just below us, the Ophanim, or, as they are often called, “Thrones,” have four.

The other Orders are, by rank – the Ikari'im (Principalities), Ko'achim (Powers), Malakim (Virtues) and Hashmallim (Dominions) – and these all have two as well. And what does “Cherubim” mean? It is translated as “Wise Ones,” or “Emanations of Knowledge,” with a connotation of “nearness,” but the testimony I bring to you concerns one who was not quite so wise... or so near.

My name means “Wrath of El.” El is a singular form for Elohim, which translates into English as God, or Lord. It does, however, have a higher meaning than the other word for Lord, *Adonai*, which is the title given to each of the seven guardians of the Presence... but I will get to that. You can see why in the past my brethren hesitated to give their names – so much explaining. For now, let us say that the only ones we call Elohim (a royal “we” as you humans say) are IaHVeH Himself and Prince Michael. As for “Wrath,” that is only a bad thing if outside of the Elohim's protection, but this concept may not become clear to you until the very end of what I have to say. I

realize that this has been a lot of information very quickly, and there is much more to come, but these things are necessary for your understanding of what is to follow. So

shall we proceed? And I will give you translations of most of the new names or terms I use as I go along.

It has been over six thousand years since that time, and still the details are burned into my memory. I am not sure if I can get across to you the true horror of the events that unfolded before the Heavenly Throne Itself. Humans have been greatly desensitized – even in the most peaceful of your regions, you grow up amidst tales of violence, a history of bloodshed, and a knowledge of impending death. Not so for the angels. I cannot make you feel what I felt the first time I held a Kherev, or the first time I put it to use. I will tell you what that is shortly, and I think I had better work my way up to it.

Yes, your History (for such I will call the Scriptures your people possess) describes the main events of the War of Sin, but how... how could it ever be complete without your being aware of the pain of its unfolding? How can we make you understand – the abomination of sin, the desolation of rebellion; it is a desert in the soul, a wilderness in the mind, and whosoever finds a way into those dark regions, may IaH have mercy on them! Who can tell it like one who has seen it?

And that is why I am here.

There were seven holy messengers that once surrounded the Throne of our Father. These were Michael (Who Is Like El), Lucifer (Light Bearer), Sarakiel (Prince of El), Raphael (Healing of El), Camael (He Who Sees El), Phaniel (Face of El) and Raguel (Ally of El). Now there are four. Adonai Lucifer, as you already know, rebelled and fell away. But what you may not know is that he took with him Raguel and later, Sarakiel. After the conflict, El Michael left of His own accord, and a Cherub, Gabriel (Strong One of El), was appointed to fill the space left vacant by Lucifer.

Also, during certain occasions, when there need to be seven, the chief Seraph Israfel (Burning One of El), Raziel (Mystery of El) who was once of the Ophanim, but is now a Cherub, and myself would stand in. Raziel's story is an unusual one, but I will tell you of him also during this tale.

It seemed strange to me indeed that the conflict would actually find its origins within one of the most holy Seven. Adonai Lucifer was not only an Archangel, he was also of the highest rank among the Cherubim. I should make it clear, though, that the title Adonai and the position as Archangel overrides an angel's actual designation among the Orders. For example: Sarakiel is a Seraph, Raguel is a Principality, Phaniel a Throne, Camael a Power and Raphael a Virtue, but they were all of equal rank with the Cherub Lucifer and (nominally) with Michael. As for myself, I was the second-ranking Cherub below Gabriel before his promotion to Archangel.

When I first heard of the Controversy, it was by the whisper of Sh'fiel (Spy of El), a Cherub who had worked together with me on many tasks before. A whisper... it gets

easier to explain when you understand that I am translating this story for you. No, not just into English, but also into symbols that you can understand. When I say arms, legs, heads, eyes, wings... these are all aspects of our beings. They take on the appearance of these physical constructs when we join with this plane, but as far as my references to them during the events in Heaven, they are “spiritual counterparts.” So bearing that in mind, a “whisper” is a method of communication from one individual angel to another, irrespective of distance, with only the two involved being aware of the message, or even that a message was passed.

As his name implies, Sh’fiel is one of the better-informed angels, but by the time he had shared this with me, the problem was apparently quite far advanced, for there was much whispering indeed among the Host. What he told me then was simply that Lucifer was not fulfilled. No matter how gently I try to ease into the heart of the matter, I can’t help but seem abrupt. The things of Heaven are not like the things of this fallen earth. To be “not fulfilled” was a horrendous tragedy in this, the One and Perfect Kingdom. In fact, it was the first of the abominations that were to unfold shortly thereafter.

Thinking back, I suppose I can say that there was some evidence beforehand. In my mind things really became noticeable when the new phase of Creation was proposed. El Michael was the One who was capable of Union with IaHVeH, and it was while in council with the Father new tasks were appointed, decisions made and plans created. From there, Michael passed the information to Adonai Lucifer, and Lucifer, their lesser Metatron, would break down, share out and explain the work to us.

Oh, I couldn’t describe how wonderful he was at his job. There are just no human words for the kind of dedication, efficiency and genuine love he had for his position. He was ever patient, ever kind, and infinitely gentle with even the lowliest of the Host; he delighted in being the first one there to encourage, uplift and teach. El Michael was at least his equal in this, of course – but He was always so busy with matters of the Union with IaVHeH and the Shekinah, which is the mystery-presence that held the Kingdom in unity, one of the manifestations of what is known in your language as the Holy Spirit, or the Presence of IaH.

Now, this new creation had us interested indeed. From what I understood (although dimly then), it was to be an entirely new plane of existence, one parallel with ours, yet subject to a completely different set of rules and laws. Nothing like this had been imagined before, and we were sure it would reflect an aspect of the Father with which we were unfamiliar – although eagerly anticipating. Yet when Adonai Lucifer explained it, he seemed... not quite as enthusiastic as the rest of us.

No one commented on this openly, for what could we say? In a place where there was no weariness, no depression... what could account for this new emotion? You can most easily equate what I perceived it to be with sadness. The only way I could think of it at the time was thus:

Once a week, all the Host would assemble before the Throne of IaH for worship. Since the creation and fall of man, there has been no occasion for us to rest from our

labors, but we are provided strength enough to minister unceasingly until all is set right again. What also sustains us is the memory of those wonderful occasions, and the expectation that soon, soon we will be able to gather in this manner again. The singing of Israfil *alone* would be enough to get you to plead for redemption if only you could hear one more verse!

Occasionally, there would be such an important project at hand that one or more of us would be assigned our weekly tasks right after that day. It sometimes happened that this kept us away from direct fellowship with the rest of the Host until nearly the time of gathering came around again. Of course, close friends like Sh'fiel and I would always whisper, but it was not, of course the same. Who would rather speak over the telephone with a favorite relative than actually be there in person? And this "awareness of separation," this is the closest thing I was able to come to at the time when I was contemplating Lucifer's demeanor on that occasion.

He was aware of separation, even though he was right there surrounded by us all. I am sure I was not the only one who thought this unfitting. And moreover, it had to have been a thousand times worse than just this awareness for it to actually be apparent! For even as we labor, whether together or alone, we are always blissfully awake to the fact that our job was assigned to us because we as individuals are the best suited for that particular task. We knew that we were actively contributing to the continued perfect happiness of the Host, and we were filled always with the knowledge of our value to the others. The awareness of separation is only there so that we will have continuous appreciation for our brothers, not to cause us the least bit of imagined pain.

But with Adonai Lucifer, this was different, this was new. This was no holy longing, this was something entirely turned inward, something he was struggling to share; but it was as if he did not know how. As a result, his resonance took on strange tones, and he did not seem in perfect harmony with the rest of us. Music as you know it is in many ways a very dramatic representation of the spiritual, and some concepts are most easily expressed along these lines.

While no one made mention of it, I did whisper to him, "Adonai, what is this?" He looked at me, but did not reply. This too, was new.

Eventually, it came to light that Lucifer had desired to have Union also with the Shekinah and Father concerning the new "physical realm," but Michael had declined his offer for help. At the time, though, we were completely mystified, and I am sure my whisper to him was not the only one on that day.

It wasn't long after Sh'fiel's whisper that it became really quite apparent that something was wrong. It took us a while to wrap our minds around that concept as well, for we were like newborn babies in terms of understanding how something could be *wrong*. From the day you are born, humans have needs, desires – and if these are not met, they result in painful experiences of different types. Even though our minds may move faster, you as a race can much more easily grasp the idea of

wrongness than we, who had never known deficiency in anything, or an unfulfilled desire.

Lucifer was sitting among a group of us including myself, Sh'fiel, another Cherub Zephon (Looking Out) and Cerviel (Arm of El), who was the chief of the Ikari'im. He was relating to us some task to which we were being assigned in regards to the new project, with the new sense of mild melancholy pervading his essence. On that occasion, one of us actually brought forth the issue more publicly, for Zephon commented that he missed the Archangel's customary warm glow. You will notice that certain angel names do not end with the customary "El," and the reason for this is that these particular ones have been set aside by IaHVeH for specific purposes.

This isn't to imply that we aren't all uniquely valued, of course – that is one of the strongest currents in Heaven, that of individuality – but certain ones have also been set apart for various dedicated functions, such as Typhon (Northern Darkness), Adiriron (Might), Dumah (Silence), and so on. Zephon, as his name implies, is an oracle. To him is committed the foreknowledge of many things concerning the Kingdom. He worked alongside Adonai Lucifer on many occasions in explaining the more complicated assignments to which we were set.

"Why do you speak to me of warmth, Zephon?" Lucifer asked, to which the Cherub responded, "I do not know; but I see something strange."

"What do you see?" This was my question, because strange is a word we usually applied to any new thing coming from the Elohim, and at that time had no negative connotations. I was trying to reconcile in my mind how this new emotion emanating from Adonai Lucifer could be considered "strange."

He responded with a single word, "*Sheemamon*," which is translated now to mean "desolation." I whispered to him, "What does *sheemamon* mean?"

"I do not know," came a whisper in reply.

"Have you nothing else to say, Lucifer?" Sh'fiel asked him, seeing that he had done nothing but stand silently since his one question to Zephon.

"Yes. Call me Adonai," he said quietly, and walked away. Even Michael had never insisted that we use His honorific. We don't use speech in the sense you understand it when we speak to each other, of course, and the connotation of our feelings is always apparent in our words. We could not even speak the name "Lucifer" without his due level of respect being made manifest in our language, so this was strange to me also in the new way I understood the word "strange." At the time, I called it what it was... *sheemamon*.

Cerviel had remained silent during this exchange, but now that *Adonai* Lucifer was gone, he spoke. "He has been like this a lot lately: silent, thoughtful. When he is right near to me, I feel as if his essence is across the Kingdom."

I asked, "Have you tried speaking to him about this? I whispered once, but I was ignored."

"No. I think he would not be able to give an understandable answer even if he were to speak. So I have not asked him." I nodded. The unease I had felt since that day had not abated, and I too wished I had not ventured to question the Covering Cherub.

Some time passed, and these new emotions were still with me. I had received no rest from them, and they seemed to be growing somehow... getting worse. I felt as if I had been polluted, a poison working slowly through my being. Now, looking back, I realize exactly what it was, and it had only partly to do with me. At the time, however, I was concerned that it would affect my efficiency at the tasks in which I was currently involved. As a Cherub, I was not only involved in getting things prepared for the Creation project, but also teaching certain others of the other Host the principles (to the limited degree even I understood them at the time) of the imminent physical plane. Sh'fiel was having the same problem, but while I decided to keep it to myself and then speak to El Michael about it as soon as He was available, Sh'fiel sought almost anyone who would listen and tried to reason it out with them.

I don't know that there was anything wrong with him doing that, but the problem may have arisen from the fact that he spoke only to those who were closest to Lucifer, as if deciding that they would have the answers he was seeking. Zephon, Zahariel (Brightness of El), Turel (Rock of El)... with these mostly he spent his time. Worst of all, he didn't seem to be getting much better. I had sent a whisper to Michael as soon as I decided to speak with Him about it, and He responded that He knew of the situation only too well, and that I would have the strength to endure my trials until such a time as we could discuss it face to face. Always with an encouraging word... that was really all I had needed to hear at the time, that He had it under control.

Ever since the problem arose, I had seen very little of Gabriel. He spent a lot of time with Michael now, and those two were always discussing something. Had I known then what I know now, I would have realized that they were also in constant communication via whispering even when they were apart. And if I, his direct underling, saw little of him, that means the rest of the Host probably did not see him at all during that time. My feeling of unease flared up every time I thought about it, and I could not restrain myself from asking him on one of the rare occasions we spoke.

"Some things will be changing soon, Za'afiel," he said to me. "They will be new, they will be... *sheemamon*." Everyone was now using Zephon's word, for this is how widespread the knowledge of the incident between the five of us that day had become.

"Can this be prevented?" Gabriel looked thoughtful, and for a second my unease went to its peak when I saw in him something resembling the same coldness we were all seeing in Lucifer.

But he shook it off, and he said, “I would spare you some of this knowledge for now, dear friend. These things will soon become clear to you... no, it cannot be stopped. Has IaHVeH ever asked you to do something you did not want to do?”

I was confused at the question but, “No, of course not,” was my quick reply. The very idea was absurd, and even the thoughts felt strange passing through my mind.

“That is why things cannot be changed. Lucifer is...” he searched his brilliant mind long and hard before he could continue. “Lucifer is being asked to do things he no longer wants to do. For this reason, Elohim will soon no longer ask him.”

“What things?” I did not understand what Gabriel was talking about...

“Guardianship of the Shekinah.”

“What?!” I was aghast. This position was what gave him his title Adonai. In the opinion of the Host, that defined him. For Lucifer to leave his position as acting head of the holy Seven would be to “unmake” himself, if such a thing were even possible. My unease was now fully blown, and could at that point have rightly been called fear. Despite what Michael had said about me being able to handle this until He spoke with me, I felt as if I could not endure this awful new experience. Gabriel saw that his words had contributed to this, and he took on that temporary “coldness” for a time, but didn’t truly seem surprised.

“I know what you are feeling, Za’afiel. When Michael explained it to me, He warned me that this would happen. I was prepared for this *fear* but I am sorry I was not as equipped to strengthen you against it as was He.”

“Tell me truly, Gabriel... will things be okay?” I feared he would not answer me, for he stood there for a moment in contemplation, then he said, “Of course. How could they not be?” But that coldness, that *sadness*, flashed through him again for just an instant. I knew he was shielding me from something.

Sh’fiel and I spoke about this, and about his own recent conversation with a Seraph named Petahel (Impulse of El). When I related the above conversation to him, Gabriel’s words seemed to cause as much of a reaction in the sensitive Cherub as they had with me, and although I had a feeling everyone would need to be told, I could sympathize with Gabriel’s hesitation. I did not like causing such discomfort. When my friend had recovered, he told me about his words with Petahel a while before.

Lucifer had always been close with Petahel, closer even than with Zephon, for the two had a lot in common. Whereas Israfil was the chief of the Seraphim, and unquestionably the most beautiful singer, Petahel had a depth to his musical interpretation that was unmatched by any of the rest of his Order. In the same way among the Cherubim; El Michael was the head of the Order, but by virtue of his more public office, Lucifer was often considered the “acting foreperson.”

It was therefore in this mighty Seraph, according to Sh'fiel, that the Covering Cherub did most of his confiding. He was the first Lucifer approached about his new concern, and therefore the best source (in Sh'fiel's opinion) from whom to get information regarding all the new and strange occurrences – aside from Lucifer himself, of course. But then again, he wasn't talking. What my friend learned, and in the best way he could explain it to me, was as follows...

It was much as Gabriel had stated it to me. Lucifer had become dissatisfied with his position, feeling that he was being restricted in the carrying out of his purpose. It had occurred to him to ask that he be included in the Union concerning various matters, and his offer had been repeatedly declined. Michael had tried to explain to him the reasons why, but for some reason Lucifer did not accept His answers. Again, here was a new thing – Michael was strange (in our original meaning of the word), this was true, and always kept very busy by IaHVeH, but He had always taken as much time as possible to be with us. He seemed to enjoy fellowship as much as any of us – even more at times, I felt – and He would occasionally seem almost wistful that there was so much else that needed to be done.

Concerning various other perceived restrictions, Petahel said that Lucifer's exact words to Michael had been, "If we were created to be holy, and if our ways are always pleasing to the Father, why is it that we must be so concerned with tasks and assignments? Constantly I transfer your commands (a rarely used word) from the Union to the Host, and they come in and go out so happily, never thinking, 'what if.'"

I interrupted Sh'fiel's account at this point and asked, "What if what?" He shook his head, "I am just telling you what was told to me." I nodded, and he continued. Lucifer had followed this by declaring that we of the Host would be happiest if we could choose our own paths, our own ways, instead of constantly being under the subjection of each other and the Union.

"What did Petahel think of that?" I asked.

"I'm not sure, but he seemed inclined to agree, from what I perceived."

"And what do you think?"

"I don't know..."

We were interrupted by my receiving a whisper from Kemuel (Assembly of El), a Seraph just under Petahel, and in charge of the outer sections of the Temple of the Shekinah. He summoned me to meet him near one of the gates, and as he outranked me at the time by virtue of his Order, I hastened to comply with no question. I used my wings to travel, as Sh'fiel and I had been a far distance from the Temple, and arrived almost instantaneously after parting from my friend. I greeted him, and Kemuel motioned for us to go through the gate.

As we stepped through into the Outer Court, we each wrapped our veil once over our eyes and twice over the lower half of our faces before letting the rest of it hang back

down over one of our shoulders as you see mine now. This way, we can still see dimly (for the interior of the Temple is unbearably bright, even to us), and our words are symbolically “purified” as they are spoken within those most sacred confines. We knelt in the direction of the Inner Temple, and then Kemuel rose and moved to one of the seats. The six-winged angel turned to me and said, “You cannot have remained unaware of the events which have been taking place.”

When I did not respond, he continued in his melodic, song-like speech, “Well, the truth is, Adonai Lucifer has a great degree of respect for you, and would like your opinion on the matters which have recently come to his attention.”

“Then why did he not come and speak to me himself concerning these things?” Kemuel smiled and replied, “He said that he thought I had a better voice for it.”

A tiny bit of my discomfort stirred at these words. I was not familiar with flattery at the time (what angel was?), but we certainly delighted in praising the gifts of IaHVeH we saw in each other. However, this seemed different somehow, a little less sincere, and I definitely did not like that Lucifer had used this method – on both of us – to communicate with me so indirectly.

“So will you meet with him?” I was asked.

“I see no reason not to,” I said. The truth is, by now I was quite curious to hear what was really going on from the Cherub himself, and in my innocence I truly believed that we could reason away these disturbing new emotions. At that point I was tired of all the whispering, and I had a strong feeling that I was not the first to have been approached in this way by Lucifer regarding the apparent dispute between himself and El Michael. However, as confident as I was in the power of reason to overcome this matter, I scarcely trusted myself to speak with the mighty Archangel, and desired to have my promised meeting with Michael first. I therefore added, “But I would like to choose the time of the meeting, if Adonai would be so gracious.”

“But there is no time like the present, dear Za’afiel,” came Lucifer’s deep voice from a distant corner of the Outer Court. I whirled around to face the direction from which he had spoken, and when he walked closer my eyes narrowed behind my veil. With his own ceremonial covering, the Archangel had passed only once over his mouth, and his eyes remained fully exposed. Fear exploded full-blown within my being afresh, because in those naked eyes I saw something I had never seen before. This was beyond coldness, beyond sadness. This was... sheemamon manifest; an emptiness in those eyes, once so loving and so tender. Kemuel, meanwhile, had bowed to Lucifer and flapped hastily away, leaving me alone in the temple with the Covering Cherub, whose demeanor made me want to weep as if with joy, but somehow... somehow I was not feeling joyful at all.

THE EMPYREAN WAR

CHAPTER 2 – A RIFT IN THE SUBSTANCE

I suppose I should take this opportunity to explain to you what a “Covering Cherub” actually is. You have something of a symbol of it – well, you used to – in the housing structure for the Decalogue tablets that were given to Moses. Within the earthly Tabernacle, there was the Holiest of Holies, and behind the curtain separating it from the rest of the Temple is the Ark of the Covenant, the actual “box” of pure gold into which the stone tablets were placed. On the covering of the box are two statues of Cherubim. They are kneeling, facing each other, with their wings outstretched to touch at the tips. It was between these two guardians, under the covering of the wings, that the earthly representation of the Shekinah manifested Itself.

Were it not for the angelic guardians, even that tiny fragment of IaHVeH’s presence would have consumed the physical structure of the Tabernacle, and all people and objects around it. It is the same way even for the holy Host of Heaven. Though we would not be “consumed” by the Shekinah, we would be absorbed into It, for It is pure, creative energy, the essence from which our very beings were made. For this reason It, and IaHVeH, who is the personification of this principle, needed to communicate with us through various levels: Michael first, via the Union, then Lucifer. But there is another meaning as well. Though Lucifer was not always in the Temple, he was always performing his office.

On a spiritual level, though he was “physically” away from the Heavenly Tabernacle, he nevertheless kept the borders of the Presence constant through some process no angel understands except those specifically trained for it. In this way, Its entire irresistible majesty did not fill all of Heaven, dissolving all that was created back into Itself. If you read your History, you will find that even the curtain that separated the Holiest of Holies from the rest of the Temple was of heavy cloth, and with pictures of Cherubim worked into it. Symbolically, the curtain (and angels upon it) kept visitors to that consecrated place “covered” and safe from beholding the glory of True Light.

I’ll tell you a secret. You yourself are a representation of this principle. I perceive that you have some small knowledge of the laws of the universe, so you are at least aware that the *atoms* of which you are made consist of a center made of protons... positive charges. If left on their own, these like charges will repel each other, and spread out in different directions. Between any two particles, and after an infinite time, this would create infinite distance between them. In the same way you have a spiritual “force” holding the nuclei of your particles together, so does the essence of the Covering Cherub hold the boundary of the Presence in check. The Shekinah is the “Nucleus” of all there is.

Of Lucifer himself, here is the rest of what transpired on that day:

I did not mean to take such a circuitous route to get back to my retelling of that incident, but my essence grows heavy when I remember it. How the other angels that Lucifer approached in this manner reacted, I do not know. That he should show such blatant disregard for the sanctity of those confines still horrifies me to recall. I think that I just stood there in shock for some time, trying to come to grips with the wave after wave of unfamiliar emotions that were flooding my essence. A lot that occurred in those dark times had me that way – speechless.

When he saw that I was not about to say anything, Lucifer asked, “Something wrong, Za’afiel?” I managed to stammer out only, “This thing should not be...”

“But you’ll notice... nothing has happened to me! I see just as well without the veil over my eyes as I would with it. In fact, it is brighter this way. Won’t you join me in this newfound discovery?”

My mind was reeling from the absurdity of this situation. Adonai Lucifer was much more closely connected with the workings of the Temple than I was... But the truth is, Lucifer’s unveiled appearance was not the only thing I had been referring to which I felt “should not be.” “I cannot disregard the Holiness of the Light. My veil stays in its place.”

The sacred nature of the Temple Courts is one of those facts angels are created knowing. We do not know everything, of course, and in fact are always learning new things about both Heaven and Earth. Every day we understand something a little more clearly, a little more deeply. But we did not start from nothingness. Neither do humans, actually, for IaHVeH has given to them such instincts as are necessary for survival. To us, in the same way, reverence for the Throne and Its various representations is necessary for an angel’s existence. Without it, we are nothing at all, for then we deny the very force that gives us life.

That Lucifer could “forget” or go against this basic principle of life was confusing in itself. The fact that he continued to stand before me, and didn’t just... *not be* was ungraspable. He should not have been doing it, yet he was – but how could something that should not be... be? I seem stuck on this point, don’t I? By now, though, I hope you are beginning to realize how disturbed the Host was becoming by these new events. Concepts we had never conceived of, we were being forced to consider. Thoughts that would never have occurred to us were being advocated. Although nothing had actually “happened,” it seemed as if everything was wrong.

In response to what I had said regarding my own choice to leave my veil in place, the Cherub only smiled, and then wound his back around in the proper way. “So what do you think of all the whispering that has been going on lately?” he asked, but behind those shining eyes, and that pleasant smile, my being could still perceive that coldness. It had not really left him. It made me wonder how long it had been with him... perhaps even before it had begun to be apparent to others.

Unable to restrain myself, I responded, “I think it should not have gone on so long. I think it should have been brought out into the open a long time ago. I think you may even have had something to do with it spreading so rapidly and widely about the Host.” I was shocked at my own words, but Lucifer had asked me what I thought. I responded honestly, of course, for a lie was not something we had any reason to understand. I had just not been aware that these had been my thoughts until he forced me to voice them.

I took a step back as the Archangel’s features twisted, but he quickly righted himself. He was aware I had noticed, however, and he turned and walked out the door of the Temple. I followed him, letting my facial coverings slip away, and then I overtook him, looking him directly in the face. “What is this, Adonai?” I repeated the question I had asked him some time before, this time out loud. This time, he responded.

“I just needed some space.” With that, he flapped up into the air, motioning for me to follow him. When we were adrift above the main Heavenly Plane, he swept his hand wide, indicating a large area of the Kingdom. “What do you see here, Za’afiel? What do you make of all of... all this?”

“It is everything there is. It is the Holy Kingdom,” I replied, after thinking a moment.

“Everything there is...” He turned the phrase over in his mind, as if savoring the sound of it, but I had a feeling he had been expecting just such an answer.

“I want to show you something. Try to keep up.” With that he reversed his direction in the air and sped off as fast as it seemed possible to go. I got to his location a while after, but he was waiting for me, his customarily happy, calm expression greeting my arrival. He seemed quite the Lucifer I had always known, as if the events of recent days had been just some kind of an illusion. All these reassuring thoughts were flowing into my being, but I could not forget his impropriety in the Temple, or the unusual expression that had passed over his face mere moments ago. These things were still in my mind, although my emotions seemed to be trying to lull me into a sense of calmness.

Lucifer hovered in a particular spot, and raised his hands over his head. The “air” (not literal air, of course) seemed to waver, and when he spread his arms apart, the Substance of Heaven thinned out, and revealed something I had not previously been aware of.

“Yes, I can see you are surprised. There is more to *everything there is* than you thought there was, isn’t there, Za’afiel?” I nodded in mute astonishment. Lucifer continued, “This is the plane upon which the new project will take place.”

I can’t really put into words what I saw. I don’t have eyes in the spiritual realm... But I could perceive it was a massive amount of energy, concentrated, seemingly limitless, and all waiting to be harnessed and shaped. “It is beautiful,” was my first reaction, and I voiced it.

“Yes, it is. Everything stands in readiness for its unfolding, but Michael delays its revelation to the rest of the Host.”

“I am sure He has a good reason,” I replied. “Perhaps it is not as ready as we perceive it to be.”

“You are sure, are you?” he said, and I could see he was actually straining to not let something show.

But I pointed it out by saying, “You must tell me what consumes your thoughts so deeply, Adonai. How can I help you? You have always been the first with encouragement or aid up until now. Can I not return this favor when you need it?”

“I have need of nothing. It is for your sake that I do this, your sake and all the Host.”

“And just what is it you are *doing*?” I pressed him. “Why all this effort, why all this unease?”

“What do you know of *unease*, Za’fiel? Do you have any idea what has been happening inside my being since this started? I have these movements in my essence that I cannot control. I perform actions I cannot explain at times.” He swept his hand toward the rift in the Substance, to the glowing nimbus of energy and continued, “I feel like that... swirling, beautiful, READY!! But unfinished – unused. I am capable of so much more than this... *avdoot*.”

It seems Zephon wasn’t the only one to whom new words were revealed. I shudder when I tell you what this one means: *slavery*.

But Lucifer wasn’t finished yet, and in the meantime I was still being held speechless by his overflow of emotions. It was as if not only the words, but the essence of Adonai Lucifer was flowing into me, and my fear threatened to knock me right out of the air. His restless turmoil flooded through me like poison, just as I felt it before. And still he continued, though I would have given anything if only he would stop. The sense of calm that he (I now know) had tried to impose upon me had shattered, and the awful truth was revealed. The mighty Cherub before me was in pain.

“All these things to do,” he was continuing, “no end to it all. We go from day to day, doing what They tell us, and never asking why. What is the overall picture, Za’afiel? Can you tell me that?” Lucifer had completely lost me at this point. Of course I had wondered about these things. Heaven is not a place of “blissful ignorance,” but of blessed knowledge. But the same thoughts that caused me to thrill in expectation over the coming wonders seemed to cause exactly the opposite reaction in the Archangel. “Will I forever serve in the Temple,” he asked in wistful tones, “or is there some bigger purpose to it all?”

“So Gabriel spoke truly,” I put in, now that he had taken a pause. “You are unsatisfied with your office?”

“I don’t know what I am, Za’afiel. I just know something is not right.” I could see that this statement, at least, was not like the others. Everything the Covering Cherub had said to me recently had seemed as if it were veiled. Not veiled like our faces within the Temple, but as if his words passed through a barrier that somehow made them *less* holy. But those two sentences he spoke... he had no need to hide the slightest shade of meaning in those. Lucifer was being the purest of speech he may ever have been.

“I don’t know what to say, Lucifer. Nothing like this has ever happened before, and maybe you should ask Michael –”

“Michael!” I was interrupted by the Archangel’s sudden outburst, and before I could recover he rushed on, fuelled by an unprecedented frustration. “I *have* spoken to Michael about this. All He does is warn me about *mavet*.”

“*Mavet*? A lot of new words are floating around these days, Lucifer.”

“This one is the strangest yet. It means ‘going back,’ according to Michael,” he responded.

“Going back to what?” I asked.

“To nothingness,” Lucifer whispered to me, as if even he did not want to say it aloud.

At that point I did have to descend back to the Heavenly Plane. Yes, Lucifer was speaking of what you call death. I grasped the concept quickly enough, which is what led to my lack of a desire to stay aloft; but the applications eluded me. Permanence. Eternity without awareness... Everything you’ve ever known wasted, gone forever, and no chance to learn or grow or experience anything anymore. I sank to the ground and knelt there as this new concept battered my mind. So many “strange” things had happened lately. Even with Gabriel’s assurance that things would be okay, I just could not see past what I was feeling. And the worst shock was yet to come.

Lucifer drifted gently downwards and stood before me, putting his hand companionably on my shoulder. I looked up and he was smiling, and he said, “Don’t worry about it, Za’afiel, take comfort. It isn’t real. It can’t ever happen.”

I wasn’t sure which was worse! The concept of *mavet*, or the implications of what it meant if it wasn’t true. “Didn’t Michael tell you about it?” I asked.

“Yes,” the Covering Cherub replied.

“Then how is it you say it isn’t real?” I looked up into his face, at the kind, gentle smile facing me, and I felt undone. I knew! I could see past it... he had led the conversation ever since we had been standing in the Temple. His every word, his every flattering word, and his every feigned gentleness had been to lead me to ask just that question. And when his answer came, I knew just what it would be. In fact, I had

known it the moment I saw that flash of darkness within his naked eyes in the Outer Court.

“If mavet was real, Za’afiel, you and I would not be speaking now. I proved it false when I unveiled my eyes in the Sacred Temple. Ever since we were made, we have known to cover our eyes and our mouths in that place, is this not so?” I nodded, as if unable to control the actions of my own being. Lucifer had led me to this dark valley, and I seemed powerless to do anything but let him continue to do just that.

“And yet,” he continued, “because of this very fact, I knew that if this *thing* were ever to befall me, it would have done so at the moment I beheld the glory of True Light. Yet I was not absorbed, I was not unmade. Michael said something which did not come to pass.”

“How can this be? There has to be some explanation...” I stammered out.

“Oh, there is an explanation, sure enough,” Lucifer said, smiling gently at me. “Michael was wrong.”

Wrong. Lucifer had actually used the same word he had when describing the nimbus of Creation energy... unfinished. This was the only state of “wrongness” we knew, for a large part of our tasks was to change something or place something at specific locations in the Kingdom. Until our tasks were completed, the area on which we were working was unfinished... wrong. To apply this word to El Michael, to declare that He had said something without knowledge, was contradictory to everything we knew about the Archangel closest to IaHVeH in nature (for so we viewed Him at the time). There was something deadly dangerous about this, and my essence reflected that knowledge all too clearly in the waves of desolation sweeping over me.

And yet, the connotations I perceived in Lucifer’s words seemed to bespeak an even deeper wrongness than that with which I was familiar. It brought to mind a continuing, lasting state of deficiency, which I knew was completely illogical. But what a choice I was left with! Either Michael was an advocate of wrongness, or Lucifer was. To every angel Lucifer brought this decision, in one way or another. It wasn’t always as clear cut as in my case, and sometimes it was even more blatant, but we each had a chance to declare our loyalty to either one or the other. How could I resolve this? They were both highly respected, both flawless in beauty and holiness... and yet, I knew what my answer had to be.

“You are not speaking rightly, Lucifer,” I said to him. “If there is some misunderstanding, we MUST get it resolved now! Can’t you feel it? Can’t you feel what you are doing is tearing us all apart? All the Host is uneasy. All these new things you have brought... Zephon was right, you will make a wasteland, an emptiness of the Kingdom if you don’t settle this with Michael.”

The sadness of sheemamon flowed over Lucifer’s being, and he drew himself up to full height. “You disappoint me, Za’afiel. I always considered you a Cherub of some intelligence, of some perception. I have shown you that I survived True Light with

unveiled eyes. I have spoken against Michael, and I have not been subjected to mavel. With all my words I have tried to show you the way I came to this understanding, that things need not be as they are. We have no need of veils or tasks. They bind us, they make us weak. IaHVeH Himself created us to be strong! Were we not meant to learn this so that we could fulfill our true potential?"

"What potential is that, Lucifer?" I didn't really want to know the answer, but I had a feeling he was about to tell me anyway.

"What else could it be, Za'afiel, but rulership? Rulership of ourselves, and of each other, and of the Kingdom itself! We are called the Sons of IaHVeH. Are we not to exercise our freedom to do as we will?"

"I don't understand..." I began, but he cut me off.

"Of course you don't. You have never thought of it! That's just it, none other of the Host has. This is all I have thought about since... I can't even remember. I saw myself beautiful, and you, my friend. You are beautiful. And Gabriel, and Raphael, and even Michael... if only I could make them understand. We are being limited by the Throne!"

I rose to my feet. I didn't even know what I was doing, but I walked slowly closer to him, looked him directly in the eyes, and I said in a loud voice, "You are wrong! This thing you are speaking of... it cannot be! Even if we did "rule" each other, would we not still be subject to each other as we are now? The only difference would be that each would seek to please himself first, not everyone else. There is enough here for all, Lucifer, this is –" At that point, I said a new word of my own. When I thought about these events later, I realize that it was IaHVeH Himself providing us with new words to express the new concepts being spoken into existence. But having a word doesn't mean liking it. I will not even pronounce what I said to him then. But translated, I said this: "This is Sin."

Lucifer didn't even hear me. All trace of the loving Archangel I once knew had been dissolved into this new, cold being. "You think yourself so loyal, Za'afiel. You have no idea the power that awaits us! Ever since I tore that meaningless strip of Substance from my eyes in the Temple, I knew the truth. Behold the thing which I am!" At that he stood back from me and spread his wings. I stepped back, and lowered my head, because he began to glow brightly – to my horror, he began to look like the inside of the Temple itself.

"Lucifer," I said to him. But he continued to glow, and as he did so, his legs lifted ever so slightly off the ground. He floated there before me, with sparkles of light framing his being, filling his being, and growing brighter by the moment. "Lucifer!" I said, even louder, when I saw that he was not responding.

"You will call me ADONAI Lucifer!" he shouted at me, and then he said something that caused me to veil my eyes: "And soon... you will call me EL!"

Now I saw why he had brought me to this deserted corner of the Kingdom, as he would later do to E'asha (the woman *Eve*). It was not merely to show me the rift in the Substance; he wanted no distractions when he revealed the utter darkness of his new self. Before my very being, Lucifer's form began to change. His wings split apart and each half regenerated... he now had four. The two lower ones separated and each new pair developed into its full size. He now looked like one of the Seraphim. And then, to the amazement of my veiled eyes, each of *these* were divided into two. He now had *twelve* sparkling wings, fanned out like flames from his back.

He threw back his head and laughed, but I had never heard a laugh like it before. This was the sound of desolation, not delight. It sounded so empty, so void of essence... I stood there frozen. "Before this, Za'afiel, I WAS wrong, unfinished. But now... behold my power. Have you ever seen an angel this glorified? No angel am I... I have learned the secrets of the Temple. I have become like the Most High!"

As he raised himself effortlessly on his twelve wings and turned to leave me shuddering in defeat, I shouted out to him, "Azazel, this is wrong! You cannot do this! You will unmake us all!" But he was already gone, and I fell to my knees again.

His name, you see, was never really Lucifer, or *Hel'el* in the Old Language. I have called him by that name so far, for it is the one you are familiar with. It isn't wrong to refer to him that way; even in Heaven, he was *called* that, but it wasn't his given name. Azazel (El Makes Strong) was the name given to the first-created of IaHVeH. That day I used his actual name to try to get his attention, for it was not what we most often called him, but to no avail. When I describe to you the new Creation, you will understand how it was that mankind began to call the fallen Archangel Lucifer, but for now, there is a more important matter to discuss.

THE EMPYREAN WAR

CHAPTER 3 – DRAWING THE KHEREV

My first thoughts after being left alone in that deserted area of the Kingdom were of Michael. I knew I was really supposed to wait until He was available to speak with me, but I could not restrain myself any longer. I lowered my abused eyes and sent a whisper to the Archangel. It was brief, but I know that He picked up on every shade of emotion that was transmitted along with my message. He did not respond, however, and with a heavy sigh, I removed my veil and looked up.

Where I had seen the horrible transformation of Lucifer only moments before, there now stood my beloved Michael, His hand extended to raise me from the ground. His authoritative, but infinitely gentle voice soothed my ears, which were still ringing from the Covering Cherub's horrible laughter. "Za'afiel, arise." I did as He said, peace blossoming afresh in my essence. I cast myself upon Him and held on as if for dear life, but He just laughed and softly bade me to follow Him back to the more inhabited parts of the Kingdom.

As we flew back, I asked Michael something which had been bothering me for some time, "When did this truly begin, Lord, this wrongness? What has happened to Adonai Lucifer?"

"We knew this day would come," He began. "We did not want it to, and I have certainly tried to prevent it in many ways, but We cannot rule by force. We cannot *make* Azazel want to be here. Should IaHVeH desire to do this, there could be no freedom. He must make his own choice, do what he wants to do, just as you must... just as you have. No one will experience mavev unless they choose to.

"As to when this began..."

"The Kingdom of IaHVeH is like the light from the Inner Temple, Za'afiel. It is always shining, it is always bright, yet we do not always behold it directly, for the walls keep the Shekinah from blinding and absorbing all the Host with Its brilliance. In the same way, though it is always there, you can choose to look, or not to look. The Covering Cherub is still in the presence of the Light of Heaven, yet he puts up walls, and will not look around them."

"So Lucifer knows what he is doing is wrong, but will not see why?" I could conceive of this on some level, especially in light of recent events, but it seemed so alien a concept that it bothered me to even hear it expressed aloud in my own voice.

“I have explained it to him. His own friends have explained it to him, but he has changed his mind,” El Michael said.

“Changed his mind?” I asked, to which He replied, “I cannot explain it too directly to you at this time, for the Host will not be able to fully understand it until they see Sin demonstrated. But yes, he has made the choice to not see the Light, to not listen to me, and he is in very great danger now as a result of that.”

“Can this be prevented, Michael?”

“Yes, of course it *can* be prevented, but it will not be prevented. The decision has always been Lucifer’s to make, and despite my repeated warnings, he has persisted in his course. This began when he misused the greatest gift that IaHVeH has given to the Host – the ability to choose.”

I had so many other questions I wanted to ask, so much else I wanted Him to explain, but something He had said about seeing Sin demonstrated made me hold back. If He said I could not understand yet, I trusted Him, but I knew I would understand soon enough. The way El Michael had said those things, though... I had a feeling my education would not be a pleasant experience.

“If we all have free will,” I asked instead, “could this then have begun in any of us? In me, for example?” Michael nodded, and said, “You all had the potential for it, you all still do, and always *will* have the ability to not do good. Lucifer declared the Kingdom to be based upon slavery, but in this he is wrong. Had this been so, the instant he chose to blind himself, he would have been removed from his position, from the Kingdom, from his own essence. Had this been so, none of this would be possible.”

I did not want to think on this concept for too long, and so I quickly said, “Gabriel told me this would be okay, but he did not tell me everything. How is this to be fixed?”

“You have seen Lucifer unfold his wings before you, Za’afiel. You have seen the character he has chosen, and you have seen the love and unity that exists in the Host in spite of it. You remember the joy and holiness you felt before the Covering Cherub’s choice, and you feel the poison of doubt and fear now.” Doubt... yes, the word he used seemed fitting for the unease that had been boiling away in my essence ever since this began.

El Michael continued, “Based upon this, you have chosen to remain loyal. Not all the Host have come to their ultimate decision yet, not all have yet been presented with the choice. When all have done so, then it will be but a short time before the end.” Knowing what my next question would be, He proceeded to add, “Those who choose to follow Lucifer will need to be sent out of the Kingdom. They will no longer be happy here. Even their removal will be a blessing.”

“Removed from the Kingdom?” I repeated His words almost unconsciously. The Kingdom was all there WAS... where else was there to go? But then I knew, and I nodded. “The Rift in the Substance.”

“That is so, Za’afiel. The energy there is of a different kind than Heaven. In that place, Azazel will be able to avoid mavet for a time, and to finally come to a full understanding of his mistake. He... and those who choose to go with him.”

I turned my head away, for I could not bear to see the sadness now present upon even El Michael’s shining countenance. “How many, Lord?”

We landed near a crossroads, and Michael turned to face me. “As many as will choose to,” He finally said. “And these others, they will go willingly into the Rift?” I asked, trying to come to terms with all these new ideas.

“You have chosen good, Za’afiel, knowing now of evil. You have become aware of Sin, and are now closer to IaHVeH than you were before. No longer are you innocent, but because you have resisted temptation, you are nevertheless holy; and your holiness now has greater value. Your eyes have been opened to the power of Truth, and this is why Lucifer left you alone back there – not because he had defeated you, though this is what you felt, but because he saw that he would not prevail.”

I did not see how Michael was answering my question, until he pointed to a long, slender sheath that was hanging from my hip, and the item it contained. “Your eyes are open now, my angel. Behold the power you have always had, a symbol of both the justice and the mercy of our Father.”

I grasped the handle and drew the object forth, knowing, as I did so, that this was called a *kherv*. Michael did not seem at peace, and he said to me, “I would have spared you this knowledge. I would have spared you all. And yet, Lucifer forced it upon himself, and in drawing the blade, in beholding the Inner Temple with unveiled eyes, in learning the possibility of rebellion, he forced it also upon all my children.”

The word I have used is translated into English as “sword,” and yet I choose to leave it as it was pronounced. Indeed, the object I held in my hand that day is not so much like the sharpened pieces of metal humans have used to inflict physical injury upon each other. Even as I stared at its length, the *kherv*’s shining surface glowed, then glittered, and then burst into flame. But this was like no fire you have ever seen: sparkling tendrils of translucent energy flowed from the hilt in my hand to its pointed tip. I could feel the energy passing into the weapon – not from me, but *through* me, from the Throne itself! As amazing as it was, as beautiful as it was, I was nevertheless aware of its purpose, and tears filled my eyes.

As I lowered the blade to the ground, the wavering light faded away, and I slid it back into its protective casing at my side. My eyes widened as I looked up at Michael, for there was a sheath fastened to His belt as well. Two Ophanim passed overhead, and I beheld that they too bore the new weapon that, I was beginning to realize, was not new at all.

“Now, Za’afiel,” Michael repeated, “your eyes are opened.”

With that Michael reached forward and touched me gently on the forehead, and instantly I felt all the fear drain away. Immediately my doubts vanished, and the poison that had been flowing through my being felt less potent. I wanted to burst out into joyful song, to fly as fast as I could to the Temple and worship the Throne! I was light, and pure, and free. I was healed! I still had a sense of unease, but it was bearable, and I realized that this would endure, this hunger for peace would remain, until the Kingdom was cleansed of Sin.

I could barely get out my thank you, and Michael smiled and said, “Your joy confirms your righteous choice. But now, your true work is only beginning. You, Cherub, must teach your brothers also what you have learned. But you will not be alone. What do you think has been keeping me so busy until now?” I didn’t know, and I said so. He continued, “You were not the first to be approached in person by Azazel. Others: Gabriel, Raziel, Anael (Glory of El), from among your friends – these too have chosen to remain loyal. Some have chosen to stand with Lucifer... Kemuel, who met you in the Temple, Turel, Typhon of the Ko’achim. Even Cerviel, who resisted Lucifer’s advances at first. But even he, the chief of the Principalities, did not stand fast to his purpose.”

As Michael spoke, and His sadness grew more apparent, I realized that it was not by my will alone that I had discerned Lucifer’s subtle errors. From the very first time I was uneasy, I had desired to speak with Michael, and His words of comfort to me then had, I now saw, been of vital importance in my remaining free. Though He had not been with me in person, I knew that His presence had nonetheless been with me – for as He spoke, many of the angels I respected greatly were listed among those choosing rebellion. I was no better than they... yet because of my trust in Him standing before me, I could see through Azazel’s deceptions.

Michael had finished speaking, and I asked Him, “And the rest of the Host? What of them?” He said to me, “Many already know they must choose, some are not aware that there is a decision to be made. Lucifer is becoming a lot more active than before in personally spreading his deceptions. As the danger grows, so must you and the others who know the truth warn as many as you can about the results of turning away from the Throne.”

I knew that all the Host was suffering even as I had been before I was assured of a just end to the whispering, and it would be a delight for me to spread peace anew among my friends. I remembered the unease I had caused in my friend Sh’fiel when I told him of Gabriel’s words, and I longed now to undo some of that. I smiled at the thought, and Michael noted my eagerness for the work with pleasure.

“Seek out first some of those I have mentioned. They will strengthen you as you go forth among the other angels.” My first choice for this would have been Gabriel, but I was aware that he was being kept quite busy lately, and I asked about this as well.

“One of the reasons you still feel unease, Za’afiel, is because you are aware in your essence that Heaven has already been changed by Lucifer’s choice. The Archangel has unsuited himself for guardianship of the Shekinah, and as such, can no longer be the Covering Cherub. The Elohim has chosen Gabriel as his replacement. And yet, Gabriel cannot do this job alone. Because of the Sin within Azazel and his followers, should the glory of the Inner Temple be made as manifest as it once was, they would all be destroyed by its purity. The Presence must be kept even more covered than it usually is, and by one less experienced in it than Lucifer. I have been helping him, and between us, we are even now keeping the rebels safe from mavev. All the Host is aware of the withdrawal of full grace on some level, although few realize just why.”

Michael and Gabriel... the two cherubim upon the Ark of the Covenant are a representation of just this idea – of the ultimate holiness of the Presence, and the measures needed to keep it covered. And so ended my conversation with Michael that day, a preparation, as it turned out, for the dark times that were to befall the Kingdom of IaHVeH. When the Archangel had left, I ran my finger along the handle of the kherv at my side with mixed feelings, and then flew off to find another of those who had resisted Lucifer’s temptations.

The Ikari (Principality) Anael was the first of these that I found. He had been taught much on the workings of the kherv itself, and he found it amusing to actually be instructing one of the Cherubim about something – as we were typically thought of as the teachers in the Kingdom. The way he explained its function was in terms of spiritual concepts that are difficult to put into words, but perhaps I can best give an example using ideas with which you are already familiar.

A physical sword will part flesh, and cause death or injury through either blood loss or damage to a vital organ. The kherv will do something similar – it parts outer layers of being, and reveals one’s deepest essence. It cuts through all illusions, and lays bare one’s motives and purposes. It causes the spiritual “heart” to bleed, and a person touched by the power of the Truth as held in these sparkling swords is forced to confront the raw, primitive essence of his or her very soul. It is like a mirror made active, revealing to those cut with it their true faces.

A holy being: a righteous angel or just man, has nothing to fear from these weapons, but those with a troubled conscience or an evil design on their heart will be reduced to helplessness as their truth-cut flesh (either physical or spiritual) rebels against the pain caused by resisting the principles of IaHVeH. A human who has not yet been fully convinced of the principles of right and wrong, if cut with this sword, will feel keenly his need to be healed. This is the “sword” the Messiah brought: the gift of the Holy Spirit, the blade of the Shekinah, the sword of truth that convicts the searching heart of sin.

In other words, yes, you too have a kherv, human. Just like me, you will not become fully aware of it until your eyes are opened. But when they are, and you see the true state of the world around you, you will realize that the Sword of Truth is something you have had all along, only your innocence has blinded you to it. That Book that most humans own, it sits in their houses unused; like a sword in its sheath, it cannot

cut, it is useless. But not only is the Word of IaH the sword, but *your* actual words as well, when you are in harmony with the Throne yourself. Among other humans who, like most of the Host at that time, are not aware of the decision to be made, or who are yet struggling with the decision, your words will cut them like a flaming sword, and reveal to them their inner selves.

But blessed is he who draws this sword early, for unless a human is cut **before** his or her final decision is made, that person will suffer the very effects the rebellious angels did, and will be forced to flee forever the presence of IaHVeH. But I am getting a little ahead of myself.

Anael also explained the nature of the kherev that Lucifer held. Because he was incapable of drawing sustenance from the Throne while in rebellion, the energy which flowed through the blade of his weapon, and that of those who followed him, was based upon the energy of his own being. Realize, though, that the energy of any living being *does* originally come from the Throne, and therefore any creature which holds this energy unto himself has, in effect, stolen it.

It is this inversion of life-essence that actuates the power of Azazel's blade. A being cut by the "Sword of Deception" will be subject to doubt and great pain of the spirit. The wounds are easily healed if one is well connected to IaHVeH's Throne, and the principles of Heaven Itself are both shield and armor against such injury. Though I didn't know it, Lucifer's spiritual sword had been slashing at me ever since that first conversation I had attempted in front of Zephon and the others. It was not until Michael touched me that I felt set aright, and now that I had learned a deeper level of perception, I would not be so easily injured again.

After receiving this new instruction from the enlightened Principality, I made my way quickly to one of the Kingdom's towers in which I knew Sh'fiel was working. As I landed at the base and made my way up the circular staircase, I was met by the Cherub Azrael (Helped by El), who was descending. We greeted each other, but perhaps my "new eyes" were starting to take effect, for I could see in him easily the desolation of Lucifer's influence. He also had made his choice, it seemed, for as we spoke briefly, his left hand rested consciously on the pommel of the kherev that hung just below it...

When I reached the room at the top of the tower, I was immediately filled with keen concern for my friend. Sh'fiel was staring out over the Kingdom from the window there, and seemed to be terribly uneasy. He had his wings folded tightly down against his back, in what I thought at the time was dejection, and I immediately suspected I knew what one of the major contributing factors was. "What did Azrael say to you?" I asked.

"What have they all been saying, Za'fiel?" He asked me in a weak voice, as he turned to face me. "Surely you know, surely you have been told..."

"I have spoken with Michael about all this, my friend. When you hear, you will feel much better, I promise." He didn't look convinced, but I went on anyway. "I

understand now all that has been happening in the Kingdom, and how it will be put right.”

I explained to Sh’fiel all I had learned about Lucifer’s rebellion, and I described to him the awful scene of his disregard for the sanctity of the Temple and of his transformation before me. I told him of my conversation with El Michael, of being healed of my pain and doubt, of the Archangel’s replacement by Gabriel as Covering Cherub, and I reluctantly told him of my awakening, and the new knowledge of the kherev’s existence, that I could now see it on every angel, whether or not *they* could see it yet – and I told him about my sense of the coming conflict.

It was a blessing to see the lines of worry in his features smooth out somewhat. To see a hint of a smile on his mouth again. I spoke to him words of reassurance and hope, and it did help, but Azrael must have been a convincing speaker, for at the end of our talk Sh’fiel could still not perceive the sheathed weapon at his side. He still could not make a decided choice. I had hope, though, and I rejoiced that my friend was still so eager to hear me speak of the truth concerning the rebels.

It was also with great joy that I recalled that the next day would be the time of the Host’s weekly gathering before the Throne, and I felt sure that this time of worship would do much to soothe the concern of all the Orders, and might even reveal some of the problems before the damage had gone too deep. I resolved to keep trying with my friend, until he could manage to shake off the layers of deception the whispering angels had laid upon him.

As we descended the tower’s staircase when Sh’fiel’s work was done, we were speaking happily again, almost like old times, and the flame of love burned brightly within me for this, my brother. I felt a lingering concern, though, for when I suggested we take a flight together to one of our favorite places to sit and converse... he said that he preferred to walk. This was not like him at all, for the Cherub loved the freedom of being above the Heavenly Plane on wing. Did he still feel so dejected by Azrael’s visit and his own uneasiness? Or was there another reason Sh’fiel wanted to keep his wings unspread?

THE EMPYREAN WAR

CHAPTER 4 – THE SONG OF ISRAFEL

Oh, what a joy it was to feel in my essence that the blessed day of worship had come once again! Still full of gratitude to Michael for my healing the day before, I arrived at my appointed spot before the Throne especially early, and I therefore had the sublime pleasure of witnessing the arrival of all the rest of the Host. Like a flock of most elegant birds, they arrived from all corners of the Kingdom. All shining with the reflected glory of IaHVeH, all regal in appearance, and wholly beautiful.

In groups or singly they landed at the entrance to the Throneroom, and walked in through one of the many doors, their wings neatly folded and their veils trailing over their shoulders like royal capes. As they neared their places, they observed the same ritual as is customary when entering the Temple, veiling their faces, and soon all of Heaven was on bent knee before the Ancient of Days. Our heads were bowed low, but there was not a trace of fear or intimidation in our bearing, for we knelt out of purest love, and utter respect for the holiness of our Father.

In the eye of my essence, I beheld the Temple's light unfolding more brightly than usual, and even from Its distance, the Shekinah bathed the Host in Its pure, brilliant radiance. There was a smile on every face, and a flame of blissful love in every eye. We greeted each other in silent joy, friends united after a week of labor, united in the reverent praise of the One most high. Nothing could mar this scene of perfect beauty for me, not even the troubling events of the past days. All the new and difficult emotions were forgotten for the moment as we beheld through our veiled eyes the King of Life upon His sparkling seat.

The Dominion Matmoniel (Minister of El) stood forth in his place and addressed the reverent Host, saying, "Blessed are we who gather in the name of Elohim!" A low murmur of praise passed through the assembly, and he continued, "Draw near in essence to Him who bids us all to enter His rest. Partake of His bountiful glory, and cast your crowns at His feet!"

At this, our diadems materialized upon our heads. These are thin circlets of "gold" (to speak in physical terms) that symbolize our existence, our lives. They are usually unseen, understood, but at will or on special occasions they are made manifest. Above the veiled faces of all the Orders there assembled, the strips of spiritual metal appeared, and sparkled almost painfully in the dazzling light reflected from IaHVeH. In one accord, we reached up and removed our crowns, the ultimate act of trust for an angel, and we threw them toward the Throne.

From all directions the shining circles spun forth and landed in a ringing pile, forming a perfect “circle of circles” around the central figure of the Almighty. As soon as the last tinkling diadem settled in place, the Throne flared in indescribable colors and I saw in my essence that the Temple also shone brilliantly. As one we were filled with an almost uncontainable rush of love and gratitude. Yes, gratitude. Does this surprise you that the Most High would be pleased to be honored by his free and intelligent children? It is not exactly thankfulness as you know it, as if receiving a needed gift, but rather a supreme joy and acknowledgement. And to be acknowledged by IaHVeH in His very presence is not something to be lightly regarded!

Yes, even Lucifer, as I beheld him kneeling not far away from me, was overcome by the joy of being near the Throne. He was looking his usual twin-winged self, and despite his now customary twinge of unease, he seemed more at peace than I had seen him in a long time. Even he was of one heart with us as we acknowledged our Creator. I did not see it then, but a real struggle was going on in the essence of the former Archangel. Even as he knelt, he felt in his deepest spirit that IaHVeH was in the right. He knew that he could never find happiness apart from the holy law of the Union, and he was very, very close to admitting his error and returning to his office as Covering Guardian, which Michael was even then freely offering to the powerful Cherub.

As the outpouring of holy joy reached its peak we all rose in unison, and the Seraphim chimed forth in glorious song. Oh, if you could only hear it, human! Even the mighty and proud angels are moved to tears of joy when a Seraph employs his powerful voice in praise of the Heavenly King. We are designed to respond that way, we are delighted in feeling the love of IaHVeH manifest in the freewill efforts of his sparkling angels. And when a Seraph sings, he does indeed shine with a magnificent light, hence the meaning of the name of their Order, “Blazing Ones.” In fact, in your History they are singled out from the rest of the Host and called “stars,” as they sang the glory of the Creator while we beheld the earth being formed from nothingness.

Layer upon layer of beautiful melody fell on our eager ears and echoed through the Throneroom, so that even the music of uncountable multitudes of singing angels seemed doubled in size. And we too, the other Orders, joined in the song, burning on our own inward level with the shining joy of just *being*. Words cannot express, dear one, the emotions and majesty of such an occasion! But soon you will understand as well as I do. The humans Enoch, Moses, Elijah... these and a few others are already there, awaiting that first wonderful day when all we angels can once again cease from our labors for a time and as one shower the Throne with our songs and our praise. Only respond to the righteous wounds of the kherev, and you too will join us someday in glory.

As the unsearchable glory of the angelic chorus faded, Israfel came forward and raised his face to the throne. Opening his mouth, a single, pure note filled the air, causing the Throneroom to vibrate ever so slightly, and causing every “heart” to thrill with new joy. The note trailed off, and just as delicately blended into another, and then another, and soon we were swept away by a melody more sublime than that which we had heard just moments before. As he completed the first verse, he was

joined by Petahel, who began another song and blended it with the melody already begun.

I chanced to look over at Lucifer, and I thought I perceived, just for a moment, the shadow of discontent pass over his face at the sight of one of his favorite counselors praising IaHVeH before the Host. It was difficult to see through his veil, however, and with the combined brilliance of the Throne, the singing Seraphim and the sparkling diadems.

The existence of the slender sheathes on every belt was not a detail that escaped my attention either. Somehow, though, being aware of the responsibility we possessed, and seeing the visible symbol of it, did not lessen the purity of the scene. It was at times a sad knowledge, because I knew on some level what would soon occur, but at the same time a deeper understanding of the principles of the Kingdom was a blessing. A responsibility, as I stated, but a blessing nonetheless.

Gradually, as we listened, the chief Seraph's notes became more developed, more defined, and eventually he was singing out brilliant lyrics, overlaying them upon Petahel's continuing, wordless melody. Through the medium of this music, every member of the Assembled Host was reminded of the enduring love of the Creator in the formation and preservation of every shining messenger standing there that day. Scenes of the earlier days of the Kingdom were brought before our eyes, when we ourselves helped to form the shining towers, majestic buildings and shining streets. When I say that I am speaking in symbols and of spiritual things, this is not to imply that the Kingdom is not a real place. It assuredly is, and the spirit-constructs can be as real to human eyes as anything here on earth.

It isn't something you'll be able to fully appreciate without the example right before you, but for now I mean only to communicate to you that we had a hand in the actual building of the Heavenly Plane. IaHVeH delighted in having us take the raw material He had provided and shaping it into useful results that would glorify His name. I closed my eyes and let the combined voices of the Seraphim lead me from one scene of Heaven's history to another. Throughout the Chronicles of the Kingdom, Lucifer and Michael were seen working together, leading the Hosts into a greater and greater understanding of its purpose, and developing what was already a majestic creation into an even more breathtaking landscape.

It was as if Israfel's song had been specifically chosen for this occasion, to reaffirm Lucifer's value to all the assembled Orders, to demonstrate to him how much the Throne had honored him with his exalted position, and to remind him of the love and respect we all still held for him despite his recent words and actions. My eyes opened in surprise and joy as I realized that IaHVeH, Michael, in fact all of Heaven was pleading with the rebellious angel to give up his hopeless defiance through the unforgettable beauty of the music. There were many things I wanted to whisper to the former Archangel, but I saw that he was content for the moment and left him in peace.

He was flanked on either side by two other Cherubim, Turel and Gadriel (My Helper is El), who did not look quite so peaceful, however. They must have been heavily influenced by the deceiver's words to manifest such unease before the very Throne Itself; and although the music was undoubtedly affecting them as well, they seemed to be stubbornly resisting its healing, of which even Lucifer appeared eager to partake. I was sincerely worried that, even if *he* would be of a mind to repent, his prior confusion of others would make peace in the Kingdom impossible regardless. Or even worse, that he had begun and maintained a course of action from which it was now impossible for him to turn, since so many others were already committed to it.

I was sure that these two were even now whispering doubts and temptations to the one standing between them, and I longed to encourage him to stand fast, and to continue to heed the warnings and encouragement from those who remained loyal. I have wondered at times whether that would have made a difference, if I had been more vocal to him. Michael has since assured me that all that could have been done was, but I still wish I had taken upon myself a more active role in aiding the Throne's measures to prevent what followed.

Israfael and Petahel bowed reverently toward the Throne and rejoined the others of their Order, even as their last, perfect note lingered in the air. A few moments were taken in silent contemplation of the melody and the message, and then the Cherub Puriel (Flame of El) flew down before the Throne and then turned to face outward to address the Host. It was usually Lucifer who addressed the angelic gathering on these occasions, but it was not unheard of for another to take his place. Even though I knew the true reason he was not speaking that day, there was no cause for undue suspicion among those who had not yet perceived the full import of recent events.

As we were in a circle around IaHVeH's Throne, all the Host could not see Puriel at all times, and when he started speaking, he was actually facing the angels on the other side of the assembly, so I and those around me did not see him when he began. Almost as respected and exalted as the former Covering Cherub, though of lower standing in the Order than either Gabriel or myself, this teacher was no stranger to addressing a crowd, and when his voice swelled in words of praise, it was perfectly modulated and arresting in its practiced authority.

As Puriel extolled the virtues of our Father, we nodded and bowed and responded in assent, and then he began speaking more directly to us. "Privileged brethren, we have before us the honor of beholding a new phase of the Kingdom! No more shall we be known as the Plane of all existence, but as the Plane Above, the Exalted Level. The Layers of Heaven are all to be placed above a new Creation, that of the Physical Plane. Within this new substance shall our Father reveal anew His love and the beauty of His will to us and to all that is."

As he spoke, Puriel had been walking around the throne, and now he came into my view as he continued speaking. "I know you all remember well the joy we felt when we were employed in the construction of the various levels of the Kingdom. Is this not so?"

“This is so,” came back the Host’s response, all speaking as one.

“Then your joy shall be complete, for in this new creation, we have not only the pleasure of aiding in its development, but also its shaping, and its preservation, as we shall minister to and instruct the new angels which our Father shall speak into being to occupy the new Creation.”

New angels? I was overjoyed! In all the ages the Host had been together, we had still not grown bored of the fellowship we shared. And now, IaHVeH would add even more to our number, even more to share in our joy! Of course, Puriel was speaking of man, and as he continued to explain the nature of the physical world to the Orders – many of whom had not yet heard the details thereof – we came to understand that these new “angels” would be of a different nature than ourselves. All of this was thrilling new knowledge, for even I, who had been involved in the project already to a limited degree, even explaining some of its principles to my own co workers, had never heard of the proposed “humans,” that were the subject of this lesson.

I could not help but notice also that Puriel was avoiding turning his eyes in a particular direction, and before I even looked over to see the object of his evasion, I knew which angel stood in that spot. In spite of the relative calm that had been afforded to Azazel as a result of Israfel’s singing, it was plain to me that he was not happy at being passed over for selection as the one to explain the creation project to the assembled Host. It seemed to me that he was even harder-pressed to conceal his displeasure at what happened next.

The angelic speaker, now fully facing my direction, said, “Behold the energy of the new creation!” With that, he spread his wings and flew up into the air, above the Throne so all could see, and then he raised his arms above his head and moved them apart, as if holding a huge globe. And indeed he soon was, for in the space above his hands the Substance of Heaven wavered, grew thin, and then parted to reveal the Rift that Lucifer had shown me a short time before. I knew that the former Archangel had desired to reveal this marvel to the assembly, but after speaking with Michael, I realized that in his current rebellious condition, giving him such a public and prestigious task would have merely made him susceptible to an even worse state.

The swirling tempest of brightly colored energy held us all mesmerized with its beauty, and each of us perceived vast potential for amazing wonders, each along the lines of our various gifts from IaHVeH. The Seraphim, I am sure, saw the patterns of energy as ideal for various vibrations pertaining to harmony, melody and music. The Ophanim (Thrones) saw in the vast, swirling chaos the mysteries of the Father’s splendor, manifestations of Heaven’s laws just waiting to unfold and fall into ordered routines. Whereas the Ophanim saw the raw data, Ikari’im (Principalities) were most likely drawn to these routines themselves, fascinated with the promise of viewing the physical laws’ effects on matter.

As the globe expanded and filled all our view, I beheld Lahatiel (Burning of El) of the Ko’achim (Powers) sparkling with delight as the inner workings of gravity, electricity, magnetism and various other forces were revealed to him and those of his

Order by beholding the scene. All of the other angels vanished from my view at this point, and I perceived myself to be alone, drifting within the unformed, majestic madness of the universe waiting to happen, and I knew that every other angel was experiencing something similar.

I remembered the Malakim, the Virtues, as I saw the wondrous colors blooming forth wherever I turned my eye, and I saw the stamp of IaHVeH's love on each ribbon of energy. I knew that this Order, ever quick to point out the beauty of the Father and His works, would find countless ways to shape and blend these concepts into visible and pleasing representations of His love. The rainbow, the lightning bolt, the colors of the sunset, the intricate patterns on the wings of butterflies and the delicate hues of rose petals, all of these were to be wrought out by the hand of the Malakim under the inspiration of the Throne.

The Hashmallim (Dominions) were to have a hand in the implementing of all of these wondrous, interconnected systems, and to preserve them in functioning order for eternity. To them also were the instructions given when natural order needed to be altered according to the will of IaHVeH. On earth, these "supernatural" events were manifested as fire from heaven, the lengthening of the hours of certain days and the parting of the Red Sea, to give a more specific example. The darkening of the sun, the appearance of the moon as blood and the other specific signs of the Throne's judgment are others.

The chaos faded from view, and we settled back into ourselves to find our beings kneeling before the Almighty, weeping from sheer joy at the beauty of the indescribable scenes we had just witnessed. As for myself and the other Cherubim – to us as to no other Order were views of the overall plan of creation made known. We had become keepers of this new knowledge as well, and it was to be our privilege to explain some of the concepts we had learned to the "new angels" to whom would be given dominion over the things that IaHVeH would make.

When my perceptions had returned to full normalcy, my ears perceived that Israfel was still singing! Although he was singing softly, almost too delicately to be fully detected, his music had played a part in the images of the Rift passing before us so vividly. And now, as the other angels became aware of their surroundings once again, the Seraph's soft notes faded away to silence.

We stood up and Puriel, who also had descended to the Plane, began once again to speak. "You have beheld the formless Void from which all the new Creation will be made, some of you for the very first time. Now, I declare unto you the One who will be appointed over the formation and maintenance of the Physical Plane." Pausing dramatically, he turned and faced the Throne, and then raised his hand and said, "El Michael shall be the vessel through which these wonders are to be brought forth."

The Throne sparkled, and with a flash of light from Its right side, the Archangel Puriel mentioned appeared before us. Michael had been in Union with IaVHeH throughout the time of worship, it seemed. He turned and smiled to some angel on my right (I could not see who from my position), and then addressed the crowd.

He told us more of the roles we each would play, explained more deeply the nature of the humans which were to be, and expressed His enthusiasm for the wonderful way He saw it all coming together into a unified whole, every bit in harmony as the Kingdom itself. We had already seen the wonderful material with which we would be working, and you can be sure we were every bit as excited as He was on that day.

He taught us also to make the Rift ourselves, the passage between the two Planes, as we had all seen Puriel do, and as I had seen Lucifer do before. When He had finished speaking, El Michael raised His hands out wide, and the shining circle of countless diadems around the Throne vanished. Each shining circlet appeared once again upon our foreheads and then faded from view. Symbolically, this meant that IaHVeH had accepted our trust and had given us “life” once again. It was a weekly reminder of our dependence upon Him for our very existence.

Still standing before the assembly, Puriel bowed deeply to the Prince of angels, and we all followed suit. Even Lucifer went down on a knee with the rest of us, acknowledging the judgment of the Throne in regards to Michael being placed at the head of the new task. All of Heaven was to be involved in its formation and development, and nothing less than the Elohim’s guidance was required to keep the process moving smoothly.

The chorus of Seraphim began anew to sing, and again we joined in their musical praises, our combined voices reflecting the surging emotions that witnessing the Void had produced in us. I sent a whisper to Sh’fiel, asking how he fared, and he responded with, “Much better today than yesterday.” There was joy in his tone (how could there not be after all that had just passed before us?), and I was reassured. If I could only get him to see the value in avoiding the dissenters long enough, there would be no cause to worry. I determined to spend as much time as my tasks allowed in communication with him, for he desperately seemed to be in need of encouragement.

When the song drew to a close, and as the day came to an end, we waited reverently for Matmoniel to dismiss us, and then we almost reluctantly dispersed to return to our appointed labors.

THE EMPYREAN WAR

CHAPTER 5 – CREATION AND DESOLATION

Some time passed after that unforgettable gathering, and the fact that Lucifer had left his position as Covering Cherub became public knowledge to the Host. Gabriel was elevated to the rank of Archangel, and Lucifer conceded the change with a fair amount of grace. Even this startling change, however, was less a topic of conversation than a certain other event. All of Heaven was abuzz with excitement as the time to begin the process of developing the new Plane in earnest drew closer and closer.

In spite of his apparent acceptance of the situation with both Michael and Gabriel, and his manifest reverence at the gathering of which I spoke, it soon became sadly obvious that he had not been sufficiently moved to alter the course of his actions. The whispering continued, and even though he had remained silent at the announcement of Michael as the vessel for the project, afterwards there were reports back and forth about his opinion on the selection.

Naturally, he made it known that he had desired this esteemed office, and pointed to his history as being the one usually chosen for the public, more visible roles regarding leadership of the angels. He suggested that he was purposely being slighted because he dared to exercise his freedom of thought, little considering the disastrous effects that the combination of his words and high position were having upon the happiness and unity of the Host. He who had once been the wisest of us all was now so bent upon justifying his position that he could no longer see that which was so clear to the rest of us.

One of the most terrifying things was the rate at which he was now deteriorating. It wasn't that he was actually any less brilliant, but he had set his mind against the Throne, and all of his mental resources were being dedicated to this pointless challenge to IaHVeH's authority. I was cut to the heart, deeply disappointed, for I had held such high hopes since the day I saw him kneel with us all before the Almighty. I even cherished the idea that perhaps he had repented of his vile displays in the Temple and at the scene of his transformation. But either Lucifer had succumbed to the influence of his friends – and indirectly his own influence, or of his own voluntary accord he had thrown off the pleading mercies of Michael.

He hardly ever smiled now, and what pleasure he did manifest from time to time was always cold, veiled and distant. We usually just avoided him, not really knowing what to say. Removed from his office, we knew he felt the weight of his own uselessness for, just like humans, we are really only completely happy when engaged in active,

productive, interesting activities. Now he had even more time to brood upon his imagined oppression, and those who had joined purposes with him fared hardly better at the tasks they still performed.

Two of Lucifer's most active supporters, Turel and the newly convinced Typhon (of the Ko'achim), decided to leave their offices of their own accord and spent their time in council with Azazel, discussing IaHVeH alone knew what. As a result, several of the Host were reassigned from less immediate tasks to cover the gaps left by their erring brethren, but accepted the alteration cheerfully enough, our collective anxiety notwithstanding.

Finally, the day we had all been anticipating arrived, and an assembly was called. Before the gathered Orders, Michael, Raphael, Phaniel, Camael, Sarakiel, Raguel, and Gabriel surrounded the Throne, and led us through a period of worship. When this was done, Michael said, "I declare unto you the blessings of a day long awaited. All the steps required by way of preparation have been performed, all the preliminary tasks completed. Until such a time as the work is complete, the Seraph Israfel has been appointed to take my place standing before the Throne."

The named angel rose from his kneeling position and stepped into the circle formed by the Guardians. Michael was enclosed within them, along with the Throne itself. From the direction of the Temple, a wave of light passed into the Throneroom through the very walls, bathing us all in holy energy as the Prince stepped towards the seat of the Father and vanished into the flickering glow of the Union.

Immediately the Rift was formed above the Throne, and it spread over all the Kingdom, making the familiar view of the Heavenly Plane fade from sight, so that we found ourselves hanging suspended in the marvelous wonder of the Void. This time it was not, however, a solitary experience, for we could perceive the presence of the others, hovering above, behind, beside and before us. On all sides, the angelic assembly awaited the commencement of this most interesting day.

From the Throne came the echoing command that has been recorded in your History to this very day, "Let there be light." As the rumbling decree faded from hearing, we perceived a tiny point of harmony amidst the swirling chaos. The random wisps and twists of energy were falling into a definite pattern, and the space it covered was growing larger and larger with every passing moment. Before this new synchronicity, the darkness of the Void was pushed back, and as the edge of the light reached my location, I spread my wings to their fullest and arched my back, letting it flow over me, through me, filling my mind and my senses.

And the voice of the Union came again, "The darkness shall be called *night*, and the light shall be called *day*." A few moments later the Heavenly Plane faded back into view, and Matmoniel called an end to the day's meeting. We all returned to our preparations, whispering excitedly back and forth as we did so about the first day, and eager to see what the results our labors would help to produce on the second.

It was on that very day that things took a decided turn for the worse regarding the rebellion. When my labors were nearly completed, I received a message from Kemuel, the Seraph who had summoned me to the meeting with Lucifer at the Temple. This was to be another such discussion, although I was made to understand that I would not be the only one in attendance. I admit, I was curious to learn what the former Archangel had to say regarding the first Creation day, and I did not delay too long in heeding the summons and traveling toward the appointed place.

I was surprised when I descended near the place of meeting, for I beheld there quite a number of high-ranking angels; representatives from every Order were present. Except for Israfael, standing with the Seven before the Throne, and Michael, who had remained in the state of Union, the chief members of each Order were in attendance, and before them all stood Azazel, Typhon, Turel and Petahel. The others were standing in a semi-circle around the little-used altar that Kemuel had mentioned as the point of meeting. This was also a less busy corner of the Kingdom – they seemed to be Lucifer’s favorite spots nowadays.

It pained me deeply to see that the mighty Petahel had sided with the dissenters, but I approached no further. My essence told me to remain unseen by the others, and so I folded my wings behind me, and crouched down near one of the pillars that formed the outer structure for the altar.

Lucifer had already been speaking prior to my arrival, and when I started really hearing him, he was in mid-sentence. “... for this reason,” he was saying, “they have chosen to alter their very names. For the sake of freedom, the arbitrary rules which have kept us submissive for so long must be destroyed. In light of this, Turel shall henceforth be known as *Abaddon*, the Destroyer. My loyal friend Typhon, likewise, wishes to be known as *Sammael*, and –”

At this point he was drowned out by a shout of surprise from the loyal angels of the assembly before them. The name that the Power had chosen for himself, *Sammael*, means “Poison of El,” so you can see how it would incite the shocked response it did. The word “poison” was one of the ones just recently introduced into our vocabulary. It was used to refer to the effect the rebellion was having upon the Host, and the connotation of Typhon’s new name was that the Elohim Himself was either to be held responsible for the dissonance of the angels, or that He would soon also come under its effects.

Neither concept was well received, and Jehoel (Mediator of El), another of the six-winged Seraphim, stood apart from the crowd and addressed the four angels leading the assembly. In his musical voice, made all the more lovely by the touching sympathy evident in his tone, he began. “Petahel, why do you stand with these? We heard you mere days ago giving the finest performance the Host has yet heard. Every day, we grow closer to IaHVeH in understanding and wisdom and beauty. Have you forgotten? If we do not continue to grow, what are we?”

My heart sank as I saw the blazing angel sadly lower his eyes to his left hip and grasp the handle of the blade hanging there. He had made his choice. Could an angel who

had chosen to stand with Lucifer still return to his former glory? This I did not know, nor had it occurred to me to ask Michael. When I beheld the sorrow in Petahel's eyes, though, I wished that this were the case. If he responded to Jehoel's appeals, which were even now continuing in earnest, fervent effort, could he escape the desolation that held Azazel in its mysterious grip?

Seeing that his words were not enough to elicit a response from the erring member of his Order, Jehoel turned to "Sammael" and "Abaddon." "And what of you two? You have changed your names? This is utter desolation! How is it you still stand here, stripped of identity and honor? You should be thanking the Father that your rebellion has not wiped you from being! You know as well as I do the warnings El Michael gave us about mavet, and yet you continue to disregard the mercies being granted to you."

At this point, Lucifer interrupted and said, "Enough of this! If Michael's warnings were true, we would have been unmade already. You, Jehoel, have seen me stand before you in the Temple unveiled, and yet here I am!"

A ripple of confusion passed through the crowd at this statement, for many had not been aware of the darkening angel's violation of the sacred Temple. Even from my relative distance, I could hear the occasional, "Could this be true?" muttered in hesitant tones. I could see that Lucifer's words were having a telling effect on the hearers, and my essence burned within me. I had been with Michael, I had spoken to Him about just this issue, and I knew that the only reason Azazel had not been blotted from Heaven instantly was because the Prince of the Cherubim had prevented it. And yet, here he was saying that this was not the reason.

His purposeful misdirection was a most painful event for me to experience. This *lie* denied the very mercies that were keeping the rebel alive, and I wondered if even he was beginning to believe his own words. I could barely restrain myself from leaping from the safety of the pillar and challenging the former Archangel on the spot as he continued his unjust statements. And it only got worse.

"Jehoel would have you believe that he is interested in your happiness," Lucifer said, turning back to the crowd. "Yet he advocates the *same laws* which have kept us chained to the Throne since the day we were formed. You who refuse to hear my words, what loyalty is this you think to display? IaHVeH created us to be FREE! Would He not have you hear me and judge for yourselves? And what I have to say to you is this: we have outgrown Him."

Ignoring the rising murmurs that greeted this statement, he continued, "We are holy, we are perfect. What need do we have for Him or His government? Why do you think the Throne chose Michael over me for His vessel? Was it not because I, Lucifer, dared to question Him? I showed intelligence, I showed courage, and yet Michael, His favored Son, is thus honored! Where is the justice? Where is the graciousness in this?"

Jehoel started to speak, but Lucifer was burning with a strange fire indeed, and he cut him off before the Seraph uttered a single word. “IaHVeH has kept you dazzled, has kept you numb. You are docile, because He fills your eyes and your ears with wonders. Can there be a more clear example than this morning’s display? This “Creation Project” is nothing but a pretty distraction from the true issue, my controversy with Michael and the Throne!”

Uzziel (Strength of El) the chief of the Virtues, shouted over even the ranting Cherub and said, “We will hear no more of this! Never have we felt want for anything, Lucifer, until you began to speak against the Most High. Now, we all desire peace! We have known Michael, and we have known you. If your beliefs have led you to the envy in your words, the hardness in your eyes, the dull shine in your wings and the discontent in your essence, then I want none of it. Nor, should I think, would any intelligent angel. Your character testifies to the error of your judgment, *Adonai*.”

With that, he turned and sped off, followed by the majority of the assembled crowd. But some remained, tempted by the strange words of their former leader. It was with a shock that I beheld Zephon still standing there, staring intently at Lucifer. Zephon the oracle had been the first to predict the effects of the rebellion. He had accurately pointed out the destruction and emotional waste that would result from the rebellious course that the then Covering Cherub was pursuing. What could Azazel and his followers have *possibly* said to him to keep him so fascinated?

“Fly away, you mindless slaves!” Lucifer shouted after the departing angels. “You do not deserve the freedom I have found! You think only of your own ignorant joy!” As they passed out of earshot, the speaker turned once again to his remaining audience and said, “It is for you I endure the pains you see reflected in my being. It is for you that I have undertaken this great test, this ultimate task. While Uzziel and the others are content with their small, meaningless lives of servitude, I envision for us a grand future. Are we not the heirs of the Kingdom? It is our right – it is our *duty* to claim the treasures of Heaven.”

All that I saw, however, was an act of the very slavery out of which Lucifer was claiming to lead them. In what was the greatest offence I had yet witnessed, I beheld Kemuel raise his hand to his forehead and remove the diadem he had caused to materialize. Bowing before the rebellious Cherub, he cast his crown at the ground near Lucifer’s feet, and the self-appointed liberator smiled in obvious pleasure. I shook my head in disbelief as I saw the rest of the assembly do the same. Even as the golden circlets fell tinkling around the angelic dissenter, I saw that not all of the Loyal Host had fled the disgusting scene.

Jehoel had remained, and now he stepped forward, eager to defend IaHVeH’s name. But before he could speak, Lucifer, who appeared to have been driven completely insane by receiving the false worship of those before him, drew his kharev. To my absolute horror, the Cherub then stepped forward and swung the sparkling blade at his challenger!

The crowd before him gasped, but I noticed to my continuing dismay that it was not in shock, as it had been with me, but in wonder! Many of those kneeling there had not yet made their choice, so it seemed to them as if the flaming sword had merely appeared in the hand of the former Archangel. All I saw in those worshipping eyes was a desire for that kind of power. It was then I knew... nothing short of a catastrophe was about to shake the Kingdom of IaHVeH.

Jehoel was caught completely by surprise, and the flickering weapon passed effortlessly through his midsection, almost too fast for even angelic eyes to follow. A line of bright, glimmering energy appeared across the wounded Seraph's body, and he fell to his knees. I could almost feel his pain. As the fear and doubt caused by the rebel's weapon flooded his being, the victim of this first act of violence could not even cry out, so intense was his suffering. The shining circle of diadems at Lucifer's feet vanished.

The other angels could only stare, wondering, but I had seen enough. It seemed as if the essence of the Shekinah Itself was driving me as I spread my wings and leaped from my observation point. With a single flap, I cleared the distance between the pillar and the altar to stand between Lucifer and Jehoel. Azazel did not seem surprised. "You finally decided to relinquish the safety of your hiding spot, Za'afiel?" I was taken aback for a moment. Either the Cherub had seen me, or his new condition gave him strange powers indeed, for I had truly believed that no one was aware of my presence.

Seeing my hesitation, Lucifer seized the opportunity, and swung his kherev up in my direction, stopping it just barely short of my throat. Its tip was mere inches away from me, and the glowing tendrils of energy flowed from the blade of the weapon to sparkle against my "skin;" but surprisingly, I felt no fear. Even as wave after wave of the dark kherev's flames encountered my being, they faded away, useless. I knew that if I were to actually be cut, that would be a different story, but my prior healing at Michael's hand seemed to have formed a protective seal around me against the incidental effects of the weapon.

As it was I stood my ground, staring directly into the eyes of the Cherub before me. I felt a new emotion ignite within me, and for the first time in my existence I knew what anger was. For the first time, I knew fully who *I* really was: Za'afiel, the Wrath of El. But this was not a feeling based upon fear or hate or frustration. This was a holy fire, based upon my desire to see things put right, fueled by the abominations I had witnessed only moments before and the slow humiliation through which Lucifer had dragged all the Host in the days past. I felt anger that Lucifer had allowed himself to be so led astray by his own desires, and I have no words to describe my fury at his actions against Jehoel.

Staring down the blade of his fiery kherev and into his shadowy visage, all my anger suddenly left me to be replaced by the keenest sorrow. I beheld in Lucifer's eyes no remorse for the intense pain he had caused his wounded brother. It was then that I knew the former Archangel had gone too far to ever return. It was not in violating the Temple that this line was crossed. It was not in learning of the kherev's potential for

evil, or even drawing it against another angel. It was the instant he made the conscious decision to attack a fellow child of IaHVeH.

Until that time, it was possible that Lucifer had truly been deceived by his own arguments. It had been possible for him to admit his error and give up his fool's quest for an imaginary freedom. But now, having committed an act that he was fully convinced was wrong, he had forever associated his essence with the desolation of sin. He had set at naught his own arguments, for his attacking Jehoel could not be justified by any sophistry of words or deception of motives. It was not that our Father no longer wished to see him saved, but that Azazel could no longer now feel the internal pull toward righteousness – he could never again be truly sorry for his actions or their results.

Lucifer must have seen all this reflected in my eyes, because he looked uncertain of himself for a moment, and lowered his weapon. He appeared confused and horrified by his own actions of a short time before. I have seen such a look before in the eyes of humans who have just awakened from a troubling dream, but this was no nightmare for the fallen angel. He saw fully that he was in error, that his rebellion against the Throne was unjust, and yet, he could not change the course of his actions. The false worship he had received from those he had misled had poisoned his mind. Only the Elohim is worthy to receive worship, and with good reason: Lucifer had tasted the benefits of godhood, and the adoration of his followers had wrought irreparable damage to his essence. Never again would his pride allow him to bow before the Throne.

Before my horrified gaze, I saw the Cherub come to this conclusion himself, and his eyes hardened and narrowed. As the now useless grace of IaHVeH was fully withdrawn from his being, Lucifer set his heart in open opposition to the principles of Heaven. I had seen a soul, as the word is now commonly used, die before my very eyes. With a sinking heart I realized that this was the reason for which Azazel had been allowed to live.

Had he been blotted out of Heaven the moment he first acted against his principles, many of us would not have understood. Some of us would have served the Throne from fear, a taint forever resting upon the perfect love and respect we felt for the Father. Could He have simply wiped the incident from our memories? Of course – but that would have been only proof of Lucifer's claims, that we are slaves, rather than sons. For this very reason, the rebel had been allowed to develop his plans fully, so that we could see for ourselves the results of sin, and we would forever after obey as a result of intelligent choice. It was also, of course, for Lucifer's benefit, for as long as there was a chance he could turn away from his course, the opportunity would be given to him.

Michael had spoken truly when He declared that He would rather spare us the sorrow of learning the nature of evil. Yet now that it had occurred, He made sure that we learned of it fully, so there would be no question regarding the nature of IaHVeH's dealing with it. That fact that the Cherub had been given a chance to turn away and be

healed was evidence enough that mercy and justice could co-exist, and the holy angels understood this.

Lucifer's features continued to twist, until he was looking out at me with an expression that could only be called hatred. "*Satan*," he hissed without warning, trembling as if the word had been dragged out of his mouth, and then before the shocked bystanders he turned, spread his wings and sped away, sheathing his kheryv in the process.

Abaddon and Sammael stared at each other in mute helplessness for a moment, and then they followed their leader up into the sky. Kemuel and Petahel flapped after them like the mindless lackeys they had become as soon as they too had recovered from their shock. I barely paid any attention to the departing fiends, however, for I had a more immediate concern.

Jehoel lay before me, almost unable to move because of the effects of the attack. I knelt beside him, and as I put my hand over his injury, the Shekinah-spirit that had led me to withstand Lucifer so fearlessly placed it in my mind that in the absence of Michael I needed to take the wounded Seraph to Adonai Raphael. The Archangelic Virtue was standing in the circle of Seven around the Union, however, some distance away. I looked about, and saw one witness still standing there, though most of the others had left to follow Lucifer's departure, or had dispersed to mull over the events they had just witnessed.

"Zephon, help me to carry him," I said, and the uncertain angel took a step toward me. He shook his head, as if to clear it, and then he wasted no time in helping me to lift Jehoel. Together we flew towards the Throneroom. Perhaps there was some grace yet striving with the troubled oracle.

Raphael managed to undo the effects of Jehoel's injury, and as a result of his experience the Seraph received knowledge of his own fiery blade. A definite difference was beginning to be seen by the Host in regards to those who took their stand to be loyal, and those who fell away. I knew that the time was not long off when the dissention would spill over into a more open forum. I had no idea, however, how close that day was. Also in my mind was the single word that Lucifer had uttered before he left the abandoned altar. Satan – the word means "adversary."

THE EMPYREAN WAR

CHAPTER 6– THE SECOND DAY

On the second day the assembled Host was enveloped by the Void once again; but the light that had been created on the first day remained, illuminating much of the vast volume of the Rift. That morning we saw a particular section of the physical plane being affected by the influence of the Union. A large volume of energy swirled together within the light, and became compressed around a single point. This new harmony swelled outward, generating an area of formless matter. The voice of the Throne echoed in our minds, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.”

As our eyes adjusted to the perception of the new concepts, we beheld that there was something even more dense within this “water.” Just as the physical waters had been separated from the spiritual waters of chaos, so this new *firmament* was being separated from both, and in fact it became the dividing point between them. A thin layer of physical water did remain near the underside of the Heavenly plane, but its use would not be seen for some time. The Throne said, “Let the firmament be known as Heaven,” and my mind reeled when I realized at that moment what I had been beholding all along.

The Rift in the Substance was not an opening between the Heavenly plane and a parallel one, it was a doorway to the “bigger picture,” to all that IaHVeH had created, be it spiritual or physical. We were being shown where our Kingdom fit in, as the dividing line between the spiritual world (all we had known up until that point) and the new plane of the physical which was even now being formed. The new creation would be the parallel world to ours, but the Void itself encompassed both.

As the scene faded and we returned to our assembled ranks around the Throne of IaHVeH, Israfil took up a beautiful song of praise. Petahel began also to harmonize with him, the latter’s voice looping high and low over the chief Seraph’s more consistent melody, causing our essences to thrill at the combined effect.

But just as the song reached its highest point, Petahel broke off and just stared in silence at Azazel, nodding slowly. I was not the only one who noticed either, for soon the attention of all the assembled Host was directed at the now silent Seraph. Israfil also ceased his praise, and as a desolate silence settled over the crowd, he turned in shocked surprise to his companion who whirled suddenly and ran out of the temple, apparently in response to another silent prompting from Lucifer.

“You have grown too bold! This day will the Wrath of our Father be poured out on you,” I whispered to the former Archangel as my anger rose in me at the increasingly blasphemous actions the Kingdom was being forced to witness. At times I felt that even the structures of Heaven were rattled by the events unfolding before us; the pure, holy energy that formed them revolted by the very presence of the fallen Cherub.

As if Petahel’s departure had been a signal to Lucifer’s followers, many of the Host rose as one and also exited the Throneroom. As he moved toward the outer area, the leader of this unimaginable affront whispered back to me, “This does not concern you, Za’afiel, or any of the other *slaves*. Only the free-minded will stand with me this day.”

Most of the other Host followed the departing ones, either to join them, or curious as to what had caused them to leave. As Israfael rejoined those around the Union, the Seven only seemed to glance knowingly at each other in sorrow, but remained silent. As for myself: Jehoel, Anael (who had shown me the workings of the kherev) and I, along with a few others, knelt before the Throne. I opened up my essence to communion with IaHVeH, and I prayed for strength to face the abomination that I knew was about to unfold.

In the days previous, I had been true to my word, and had spent much time with Sh’fiel, comforting him and assuring him with the words of Michael and others that all would soon be well. At the times we spoke he seemed to take courage, but by the time I saw him again he had usually lapsed back into his gloom. He had left the Throneroom with the second wave of angels, and I sent a whisper to him asking what was going on out there. I got no response.

I stood up and, with the other angels who had remained, we reluctantly made our way to the exit. As we left the Throneroom we unveiled our faces – although, thinking back I believe I would have preferred to protect my eyes from what I then beheld. Lucifer was once again standing before an entranced crowd, with his most loyal companions at his side. Again was he uttering his charges against the Throne, but something was different about this occasion. There was a force there, a finality that had not been heard in his voice before he had completely fallen.

His accusations were now more detestable also, for he even dared to cast a shadow of deception over the beauty we had just witnessed on the second morning. “How can you believe your perceptions?” he was saying. “IaHVeH would have you believe that we are but a layer of all His wonders. Shall I tell you what I know? These “humans” that He proposes to create – we are to be their servants! I have learned the Elohim’s purpose for these *angels* of water and dirt. It is they, and not we, He proposes to make the heirs of all that is.”

The Host was noticeably affected by this, but even if this were true I was sure that IaHVeH would make His purposes for both us and humanity clear enough when the time was right. Lucifer was abusing the knowledge he had gained while he was still Covering Cherub. By twisting the details of his earlier councils with Michael, he was

using what we later discovered to be the plan for a most beautiful arrangement to serve his own dark ends. Was this not a blueprint for the exact deception that the fallen Cherub would later use on Adam and Eve? Had they awaited the knowledge of IaHVeH in His due time, they would have learned of good and evil soon enough, but because they fell prey to the earlier, flawed interpretation of Lucifer, all the suffering that followed was the natural result.

Neither was Azazel finished. He continued his speech, “I for one will never bow to serve a physical being. Why should I, a child of IaHVeH, a creature of spirit, use my superior hands and mind to minister to the needs of a lesser creation? The Throne is falling under Its own weight, and we can see the evidence plainly enough before us!” As the noise of the conversation in the crowd before him increased, Lucifer drove his efforts home. “Who, then, will stand with us? Who will throw off the bondage we have endured for so long, and leave behind this obsolete leadership? Who is strong enough to join me? Let him rise now, or evermore be a servant to both IaHVeH and human!”

This arrogant boldness has never left the fallen angel. For it was in this same presumptuous tone that he would later speak to the second Elohim, showing Him the kingdoms of earth and saying, “All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.” Upon the Man, Yahshua, this invitation had no effect, but four thousand years before it met with much greater success among the Heavenly citizens he had thrown into confusion.

Pure, holy anger rose in me, and those standing with me, as we beheld a large number of those assembled there hesitatingly step towards Lucifer, Sammael and Abaddon. I wanted to rush the crowd and prevent them, but the Shekinah-spirit held me in check. “Let them choose. You were allowed to choose.” I fell to one knee, trying to remain calm as I felt the love and mercy of IaHVeH pleading with those who were separating themselves from the loyal host, and I perceived the rays of light being rejected in favor of the promises that Azazel held out to them.

Behind and beside me, the others were also struggling to hold themselves under control. Our eyes blazed with fury, to behold the depths to which the rebels had sunk, and the large number that had allowed the poison within them to dictate their choice. One by one, I saw the angels that stood with Lucifer look about themselves with wonder, and then down to their own belts, where the newly discovered spirit-weapons were encased. To my limited relief, I saw that those who had remained loyal were also having their vision augmented to perceive this new truth.

“The time has come, my angels,” Lucifer said, “to put an end to our captivity. We will overthrow the government of Heaven itself, and we will rule our own lives. We will be free forever!” Even his own followers were aghast at this statement, however. To stand against IaHVeH? How could such a thing be conceived? What had happened to the mind of the fallen angel that he should even imagine such an offence for the most fleeting instant? And yet there he was, proclaiming his unholy purpose to all without a hint of shame. When I saw the light fade from his eyes during my earlier encounter with him, I had no idea to what depths this Satan would plunge.

Yet even his horrified followers were driven to their knees in wondering worship, as the still mighty angel unfolded his true power to those before him. I had seen this before, but even the other few who stood beside me (there were twelve of us in total) gasped as Lucifer transformed into his twelve-winged form. When I looked and saw that even the loyal angels were trembling, we knew our time to intervene had come.

We descended the steps on wing, not even taking the time to run the distance, and began to comfort the astonished witnesses. I felt pity for those who were deceived, for they had no one to comfort them. While Lucifer and his supporters were praising and flattering those that stood with them, we were opening up the troubling truth to those who had responded to IaHVeH's grace. We tried as best we could to prepare them for the coming conflict, and eventually we saw them becoming more calm.

Of course, it was not a perfect peace by any means. How could it be, when the world we had known for so very long had apparently fallen around us in a matter of hours? Among Lucifer's converts, we loyal angels beheld many we loved most deeply. Looking over into the reveling and proud company, I saw Zephon still standing uncertainly among them. Petahel and Kemuel, of course, were rallying the others, but certain individuals I beheld there came as a great shock.

Gadriel (My Helper is El) was still among them, a Cherub that had long been respected by myself. Though he was lower than I in rank, I had consulted his wisdom often concerning the finer points of knowledge. Kafziel (Speed of El), a once eager and cheerful Dominion was there, as well as the Throne Zagzagel (Splendor of El), whom I knew to be a fast friend of Raziel, the chief of the Ophanim.

Raziel was among us, but the four-winged angel could not seem to come to terms with the fact that his Order-brother was among the enemy. He stood there silently while we went around speaking with others, and I knew he was fervently whispering to Zagzagel, earnestly entreating him to reconsider his stand. This sad situation reminded me of Sh'fiel, and I resumed my search for him among both Lucifer's followers and those who had remained true to the Throne. He was nowhere to be seen.

As my eyes roamed over the vast crowd of rebellious angels, easily a third of our total number, I locked gazes with Cerviel, the chief Principality. This Ikari had been one of the first to stand up to Azazel when his unease was just beginning, but now there he stood, just another blind follower. Many of the remaining Principalities and Powers (since Typhon, the chief Power, had also fallen), denounced the leadership of their Order, and the vast number of their brethren who had followed them. Since that day, we have referred to them as the Or-Ikari'im and the Or-Ko'achim respectively ("or" means "light"), to distinguish them from the fallen majority of those Orders to whom the human writer Paul refers in his additions to your History.

Just as we were strengthening the resolve of the last of the troubled angels, Lucifer's voice rang out above the commotion of his crowd and our hastily uttered prayers. "Fear not for their greater numbers, my angels. Only behold my transformed glory, and know where the strength lies." He proudly fanned out his twelve shining wings,

and continued, “Behold, it is possible to stand against the Throne, and to overcome.” He motioned with his hand towards the Throneroom, and as if on cue a loud crash shattered the silence that his loud exhortations had produced.

All eyes were drawn upwards as a section of the Throneroom’s roof exploded and the Archangel Gabriel came flying outward. And yet, he was not flying under his own power, for his wings were not spread. Rather, he had been hurled upwards with great force, and we were soon to discover why. As the Covering Cherub crashed to earth, Raguel and Sarakiel, two of the other angels of the circle of Seven, also emerged from the opening in the roof and descended upon him, their kherevs drawn and blazing.

The Ikari and the Seraph, two of the enlightened Archangels, had sided with Lucifer and betrayed the other circle members. I assume that they elected to target Gabriel first, who had replaced their leader as Archangel, but their attack upon him was thwarted when the other three, Raphael, Phaniel, and Camael, along with Israfel, flashed out of the entrance and opposed them with drawn blade. All of Heaven stood wondering as kherev met kherev, flames of energy flickering off at each strike.

The two traitors launched themselves again into the air, and the other four angels pursued them. Adonai Gabriel rose to his feet, but he fell to his knees again, his hands shooting up to cover his face. Suddenly he wrapped his veil many times around his head. Before I could stop to consider what this might mean, I saw the twelve-winged abomination that was Lucifer taking off to aid his allies. Puriel (who had just discovered his own sword) glanced at me, and together we ascended to join the fray.

When Lucifer saw me following him, he stopped in mid-air and turned fully towards me, extending his wings to their fullest in a show of intimidation. The Shekinah-spirit burning within me would allow no such deception, however, and I drew my weapon, which burst into glittering flame as soon as it cleared the sheath. There was no eagerness on my part to attack the fallen Cherub, but the look in his eyes told me that he was feeling no such qualms. For the sake of Heaven itself, which was groaning for release, and for the sake of all who dwelt therein, this *Satan* had to be overcome.

Azazel rushed at me, and by instinct I raised my blade to parry his initial blow. A shock ran up my arm; never before had I experienced such a forceful effort. I barely prevented the strength of his attack from driving my flaming blade into my own chest, but I managed to spin aside as he went barreling past. Still uncertain of myself, I dove down after him to press my momentary advantage.

I felt as if I was imagining the entire experience. I believe it was one of IaHVeH’s mercies that I was not allowed to feel the full “reality” of the situation, and I wondered how the other angels were faring. We who had always been in harmony with each other, brothers dwelling side by side in perfect peace, were fighting amongst ourselves. I looked about, and saw that the battle had been taken up by the two companies also. In the air, on the plane and on the steps of the Throneroom, angel fought with angel, a uniform look of disbelief on the faces of the soldiers of both sides.

Even at that moment, as I swung my fiery sword at Lucifer, I expected the scene to fade away to reveal the truth – that all this had been some dark, troubling vision. But his resistance to my attack was real enough, and just his defensive act almost knocked me backwards. Perhaps the fallen Cherub had been practicing with his sword, or maybe Jehoel had not been Lucifer’s only victim. In any case, I caught on quickly enough, and with Puriel’s help I was soon effectively keeping him from hindering the four angels in their pursuit of Raguel and Sarakiel.

This continued for some time, and then Raziel and another Throne, Zadkiel (Righteousness of El) flew up near us, and started to attack Satan, leaving me free to see to Gabriel below. The Archangel was still on his knees with his face hidden by both his veil and his hands. I landed near him and, sheathing my kherev, I knelt beside him and asked him what was wrong. He could get out only one word, and even this as a result of some effort, “Shekinah.”

At the time I thought he meant that some of Lucifer’s followers had taken it upon themselves to do harm to the Temple, and I left him there to go and investigate.

Upon my arrival there I found the place deserted, but I veiled myself and went in anyway, just to be sure. It was a relief to be within the sacred walls. In the brief time since the battle had started, I had already reached my limit, and in here, separated from the violence and confusion and pain, I sat down and closed my eyes.

I could not remain long, however, for the sounds of battle soon came again to my ears. All of Heaven seemed covered with clashing duels, and I knew I had to do my part to help, as much as the conflict repulsed me. Leaving my refuge, I looked up and saw that Sammael and Abaddon had joined the two treacherous circle members, making their battle an even four-on-four contest. Lucifer had dispatched Zadkiel, leaving him to plunge to the ground in pain, and Raziel now opposed him alone.

As I made ready to go to the valiant Ophan’s aid, I was struck from behind. Fear and distress, the effects of a dark kherev’s wound, threatened to overcome me, but fortunately the injury was not deep, and I was able to deal with the pain. I turned just in time to deflect another attack from the angel standing behind me. The Principality Cerviel swung his blade again, intent on capitalizing on my initial laceration, but he overestimated the damage his first attack had done, and he underestimated my hatred of the rebellion that had led to this insanity.

Faster than I thought I could move, I darted and slashed with my kherev, eager to go and help Raziel. Cerviel fell back against the wall of the Temple, obviously surprised by my energetic assault, but he managed to dodge to one side and escape. I was not content to let him get free only to strike me in the back again, however, or to bedevil some other unfallen angel, so I charged after him and soon had him defending against another forceful combination of blows.

Eventually, I saw an opportunity and deflected one of the Principality’s attacks, knocking his sword-arm high, and then I moved in and dealt him a deep cut across his chest. Cerviel dropped his kherev, which instantly flickered out, and fell backwards

against the Temple wall, gasping. I almost dropped my own blade, so horrified was I at causing another being such pain. I turned away as I saw the sparkling essence of the fallen angel revealed in the wound. Cerviel placed one desperate hand over his injury and another on his forehead as my weapon's power took effect, and he was forced to confront the wickedness that disobedience had planted in his essence. Unless he was somehow healed, or until he left the holy atmosphere of Heaven, he would be useless.

Struggling with my sympathies, I remembered the pain and confusion that Lucifer had caused me from even the earliest days of his rebellion, and I knew that the Throne had graciously delayed this day. But now, for the sake of the future happiness of all IaHVeH's loyal children, the danger needed to be removed. Imagine a group of young children playing innocently in a yard. If one of them finds a rusty knife in the grass somewhere and starts going around cutting and stabbing the other infants with it, does he not need to be stopped?

And if, somehow, the child becomes permanently physically attached to the knife, as much as you may love this child, does he not then need to be bodily removed from the yard for the very safety of the other children? I see that my example is distasteful to you. It should very well be – and yet, even this illustration fails to convey the awful revulsion felt by every loyal angel as we defended our home. I am sure the rebels must have felt something similar, yet they were blinded by Lucifer's deceptions, and the true consequence of their actions was rationalized away by their eloquent master.

Having come to grips with the situation once again, I flew up to assist Raziel, of whom the darkened Cherub was getting the better. Together, we forced Azazel back into a crowd of struggling, airborne combatants, and for a time it seemed as if our combined efforts would have gained us an early victory. However, as he neared two angels locked in battle, the one who was his follower froze and turned to him in surprise. What Lucifer had whispered to him I do not know, but what he did next I will never forget.

Seeing that he was in trouble, his one kherev against both of ours, Satan darted towards his confused underling and snatched the weapon out of his hand! His defenseless pawn quickly fell to his opponent, and Lucifer turned again to Raziel and myself. "*Meefletset!*" I shouted at him, which means something like "monster," for I was outraged that he would deal so traitorously with one of his own. He only laughed at me and said, "As long as I stand, the rebellion continues! What is the loss of one warrior to preserve the safety of the king?"

My anger knew no bounds, and I said, "Is this the nature of your kingdom, Lucifer? Is this the basis for your rulership?" But my fury had made me careless, and I had left a wing unguarded. Even as he parried one of Raziel's attacks, the Cherub swung his other kherev towards me, and it slashed deep into my feathered appendage. The pain from this injury had not hurt as much as Cerviel's surprise attack, yet with a wounded wing I could not remain above the plane, and I spiraled to the ground. My fighting companion fell back, knowing that he could not stand against a twin-bladed Azazel, but Puriel (who had been drawn away from Lucifer by another opponent) saw what

had happened, and he quickly put down his foe. He joined Raziel in keeping the twelve-winged angel occupied.

My wings, though damaged for the moment, managed to give me enough “wind” resistance to soften my landing. Unable to help with the battle in the air, I directed my efforts to assisting the holy angels who were fighting on the ground. I beheld wounded angels to the right and to the left of me. I shook my head in immeasurable dismay as I remembered the past and recent days of simple joy, the exhilarating seasons of worship and the boundless love we had felt for each other – one and all.

All of this had been swept away in mere weeks, and by one who had once been the best of us all at those things we loved. The only thing keeping me going was the memory of the comforting words of Michael, that this would turn out okay. And yet, how empty the Kingdom would seem, devoid of so very many of its bright stars. But I banished the gloomy thought from my mind. There was work yet to do.

As I fought angel after angel, I started slowly making my way towards the spot where I had left Gabriel. After what seemed like days I arrived there, only to find that he was gone. As I was on foot, I knew a search for him would be pointless, but I was spared the effort when I heard his voice behind me shouting, “Zephon!” I turned and saw that Gabriel had apparently overcome whatever had been bothering him, and was flying towards the angelic oracle.

Zephon was not as swift as Gabriel, and the Covering Cherub overtook him and struck him to the earth with his bare hands. Landing beside him, the pursuer drew his fiery sword and pointed it directly at the downed angel’s chest, saying, “Where is Lucifer?” I was confused, and was about to tell the speaker that I had just left off fighting him, but a quick glance in the air revealed that the once and former Archangel had overcome both of his opponents and had removed himself to some other spot. I had been engaged in active battle on the ground for a longer time than I had thought.

The oracle scrambled to his feet, but made no move to draw his own weapon. I was surprised; the uncertain Cherub had stood with the other followers of Lucifer, yet he had not attacked any of the loyal angels. When Zephon refused to answer, Gabriel prepared to finish him off, but was distracted by two rebellious Powers. While he was engaged in defending himself from these, his previous target managed to slip away unnoticed (except by me). I had no time to go after him, however, for as I was about to do so, my essence leaped in joy when a whisper from the most welcome voice filled my mind. “Za’afiel, return to the Throneroom and meet me there.” I quickly ran to answer El Michael’s request.

Arriving there, I found that Michael had already revived many of the loyal wounded. Puriel and Raziel, who had both fallen in battle against Lucifer, were standing there with grateful smiles, along with Zadkiel, the Seraph Hadarniel (Benevolence of El) and several others who had been restored. Other angels staggered towards us and collapsed, and Michael quickly healed my wounded wing and back, then went off to help them.

Returning to us, He said, “Where are Raphael, Israfel and the others?” Several of us babbled, “Fighting with Raguel, Sarakiel, Abaddon and Sammael.” Unfortunately, not all of us listed them in this order, and the resulting rush of syllables was completely incomprehensible. Michael, however, only nodded, having understood the frenzied exclamations.

Just then, we heard a strange cry from some distance away. Adonai Gabriel, who had been fighting two rebellious Ko’achim when I had left him, was now bowed down on the earth again with his hands covering his head. His two opponents seized the opportunity and darted in, but they were thrown backwards by a blinding globe of light that suddenly appeared around the Covering Cherub. The Archangel floated slowly up into the air, and then drifted motionless above the battle, protected from attackers but apparently helpless to move or to find release from his strange agony.

I was about to ask El Michael what the meaning of this was, but just then the twelve-winged monstrosity flew into view, and Michael rose up into the air to meet him. All of those who were with Him flew up also, thinking to put a final end to the dispute with no further delay. We were surprised, therefore, when Michael said to Azazel, “Withdraw your angels for a time. The day draws late, and the Elohim would have us rest a season.”

I could tell from the hateful smile that crossed Satan’s face that he took this to be a sign of either weakness or cowardice. I marveled at his blindness, for here I hovered, fully restored, as did many whom Lucifer and his followers had overcome, not to mention El Michael, who was fresh from Union with the Most High. Yet the fallen angel, in a most condescending tone, did not dispute the wisdom in the Prince of angels’ reasoning, and he bowed mockingly and sped off. I could scarcely recognize the once brilliant Archangel in the demon that departed from us that evening. Even had our injuries remained, as they had in the case of his followers, they were still outnumbered two to one.

Almost in unison, his fallen comrades left off fighting and followed him to some unfortunate corner of the Kingdom. Raphael, Phaniel and Camael, along with Israfel, joined us, their opponents having fled. Adonai Camael in particular had been wounded more than once, and El Michael lost no time in healing them when we had gathered near the broken-roofed Throneroom.

We spent the night comforting each other, and taking courage from Michael’s encouraging words. Thereafter, the twelve of us who had been most thoroughly prepared for the conflict, along with the remaining Archangels, went about soothing the fears and calming the anxiety of those who had been most deeply affected in spirit by the violence. Though I rejoiced in the fact that I had been prepared early and was now able to serve in a most useful capacity, I was feeling the need for some comfort as well – but I knew these others suffered far worse than did I. One of the main weights upon my essence was the knowledge that Sh’fiel was still nowhere to be found – at least... not within the camp of the faithful.

THE EMPYREAN WAR

CHAPTER 7 – THE UNFOLDING OF THE SHEKINAH

A short while before we perceived it to be the morning of the third day, El Michael retired to the Throneroom, taking with Him Raphael, Phanael and Camael, the three remaining Archangels. He also took Israfael to replace Himself but, as Gabriel was still enclosed above the Heavenly plane in the mysterious orb of light, three more were needed. Raziel, Zahariel of the Dominions and myself were elected to fill the places left empty by the Covering Cherub and the two renegade Archangels.

Most of the remaining number of loyal angels knelt and awaited the commencement of the day's addition to the creation project. In order to avoid any surprises, however, we placed Uzziel of the Virtues along with the Powers Lahatiel and Andiriron outside of the Meeting Hall that housed the Throneroom to stand guard against any possible early attacks. This was only necessary for a short while, however, for soon after El Michael stepped into the sphere of the Father, the Union was formed, and mere moments thereafter we were enveloped into the nothingness and everythingness of the Void.

Looking once again at the three separate layers of reality formed so far, I knew that this day would bring something new – something far greater than anything we had seen on the two previous occasions. We heard the voice of the Union rumbling forth, saying, “Let the waters under the Heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the *dry land* appear.”

We looked and saw that the physical waters swirled together, coalescing over a large globe. From the middle of this ball, something new was emerging, something that was physical like the water itself, but was even more rigid and definite in its energy patterns. This *dry land*, this solid matter swelled outward from the middle of the sphere of water, and expanded until it had covered most of it. A ball of this dense, hard material was now hanging suspended below the realm of Heaven.

The Throne declared, “Let the dry land be called *earth*, and the regions of uncovered waters be called the *seas*.” We bowed in assent. The decree continued, “Let the earth bring forth grass, and herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth.”

Before our amazed eyes, we saw that something upon the surface of the gray-brown orb was moving! From nowhere, little green constructs were springing up to cover all of the dry land areas of the new world. And many of these bore still smaller constructs: fruits of various sizes, shapes and beautiful colors, as well as the more

intricately beautiful, but more delicate growths: the fragrant flowers. The Virtues vibrated in pleasure as their abilities and thoughts were channeled through the Union to cloak this wonder of the physical plane in beauty, just as the Principalities and Powers had when the orb itself was being formed.

Some of the plants were not so little, however, and majestic trees loomed over much of the earth, every bit as laden with fruit and flowers as their smaller counterparts. We could barely contain our wonder as we saw all the strength and stability of Heaven's towers reflected in these physical representations.

I perceived that Lucifer's angels were also a witness to this scene, although unwillingly in most cases. Many had fallen victim to his deception that the Void and all within it was just a pretty lie, but this too was about to be disproved. After admiring IaHVeH's handiwork from a distance, we were next bidden to descend unto the earth and spend time there! On this, the most beautiful of days, we would be allowed to experience the wonders of physical creation up close. I eagerly drew near to the young planet, and landed in the middle of a lush forest. All of the loyal angels followed suit, some descending near rivers, others upon the flat lands and still others into the depths of the seas. With our own hands we touched the glory of the Father's creation. It was real!

Many of the fallen ones also came with us, although grudgingly. They were loath to see their master's claims refuted, but no eye could deny the almost unbearable loveliness that had been wrought out of the chaos of the Void. I felt that many of their troubled thoughts were comforted for a time, and the peace and happiness they felt before they had made their unrighteous choice was brought to their remembrance. What was this, then, but a final dramatic plea from IaHVeH to turn from their self-destructive actions?

I held a single, green leaf between my fingers. Looking closely at it, I recognized with tear-filled eyes the principles of Heaven wrought delicately into even this minuscule object. They are not concepts I can easily put into words, but life, growth, renewal... these and so much more I saw reflected in the tiny, chemical messenger. Excited whispers were passed back and forth from angels in all corners of the world as they too discovered the smallest details and the greatest displays, recognizing the Father's stamp upon them all.

From his place around the Throne above us, Israfel took up a joyful song of praise and thanksgiving. The other Seraphim joined in, bursting into blazing flames as their voices united with their chief. They rose up into the air and hung suspended in the dark sky, shedding their light upon all that had been formed as chorus and verse filled the air. We others who had remained loyal to IaHVeH were also seized with inexpressible joy, and we added our songs and shouts to the sparkling choir. This is the scene which would later be revealed and recorded in your Historical book of "Job," for it was a wondrous sight indeed: the fiery Seraphim praising in song, and we the other sons of the Most High unable to resist participating in the joyful noise.

Oh, that this time could have lasted forever! But with a heavy heart, I knew that we must return to the unpleasant tasks of the remaining day. Never before had I felt this sense of dread, this hesitancy to see what was around the next corner, to behold the unfolding events. But I needed only to open my mind to feel the disquiet and pain of the deceived members of the Host. This could continue no longer.

As I opened my eyes and saw the Throneroom reformed around me (though truly I was the one reformed in the Throneroom), the other unfallen angels rose to their feet. As the six others and myself stepped out of the circle surrounding the Throne, El Michael also appeared, separating Himself from the Union. With Him also joining the battle, we knew that this was the day – this was the promised end to the madness. My burdened essence was made lighter, knowing that the suffering of the loyal angels was soon to come to a close, and hoping that there would also be a satisfactory conclusion regarding those who had chosen to follow Satan.

At El Michael's direction, we assembled those with us into sections by their Order, and with each of these we placed the highest-ranking unfallen member as its leader. With their customary unity and cooperation, they quickly fell into their assigned ranks. Michael took council with the leaders of the seven divisions: Israfel, Puriel, Raziel and Ithuriel (Discovery of El), the highest-ranking Or-Ikari next to Anael. Anael, however, was among the pre-ordained twelve, as was myself from the Cherubim, and we were therefore not appointed chiefs of our Orders. These four, along with the Power Lahatiel, the Virtue Uzziel and the Dominion Zahariel were the new chiefs of the angelic divisions. Israfel, Zahariel and Uzziel were among the twelve who were sealed, however they had already been Order chiefs, and this did not change. When the attackers arrived, they would find us organized and ready.

The members of the twelve who had been sealed before the start of the conflict were to form the forefront of the defensive company, and would be the first to encounter Lucifer's army. Bowing low before our Prince, we departed from the Meeting Hall and flew up into our assigned positions, drawing our kherevs and awaiting the onslaught. With everything I was, I prayed that this would be the last such occasion.

When the approach of the rebels filled the air, the assembled Orders rose up behind us, and rushed whispers were sent back and forth through the loyal company. When Lucifer's followers drew near, however, we were filled with not a little pity for our mislead brethren. While it is true Azazel had managed to develop some kind of healing abilities during the night past, those who had received his attentions were nowhere as whole as were we, who had been touched by Michael. Though they flew and moved about freely, the wounds they had received on the day before were still visible, and it was apparent that many of them still felt a measure of pain. The wounds of holy weapons are deep indeed.

Nevertheless, the soldiers of the fallen angel plunged into battle as readily as they had the day before, having been driven into a frenzy by whatever flattery or deceptions their well-spoken master had elected to place in their minds during the respite. I later learned that Lucifer had prepared the most evil falsehoods for those who had been touched by the beauty of the third day of creation. Beholding that many of his angels

were on the brink of repentance, he assembled them together afterwards, and revealed to them the “awful truth” that they had already gone too far, and that by drawing their blades and attacking the holy angels, they had forever placed themselves beyond IaHVeH’s forgiveness.

Whereas this was true for him – for I had seen with my own eyes the grace of Heaven withdrawn from his essence – it was not necessarily so for those who could still feel the loving appeal of the Father. Lucifer had cut into Jehoel’s being with full knowledge of his unjustifiable position. Among many of his followers were those who had been honestly confused by his claims. Whereas they were indeed guilty of blind trust and throwing off the loyalty they had always known, this was a pardonable offence. That the Father is a harsh and exacting Judge is the claim of Lucifer, and has ever been so, even down to his teachings among humans this very day – including, sadly, many who profess to follow His holy ways. IaHVeH would see all preserved against Satan’s deceptions, and will save to the utmost anyone who can possibly be redeemed.

Before there was opportunity for any more thought the dark Host was upon us, and soon the atmosphere of Heaven was again filled with the sounds of conflict and pain. And yet, the intensity of this day’s struggle far exceeded that which I had witnessed the day before. Lucifer’s skills and intellect were impressive indeed, for in the course of a single day, he had developed undreamed of sophistication with the spiritual weapons, and had taught many of his followers these powers.

I saw one fallen Cherub flying towards the battle with his fiery khrev drawn. He also had two other sparkling blades (I assume taken from those of his comrades whose wounds had been too severe for Lucifer to sufficiently mend) whirling and dancing in the air around him. Also, many of them had discovered that they could throw their swords, causing them to whirl through the air, and the resulting spinning, flickering disks of energy would return to their hands upon striking (or missing) their intended targets.

Even more appallingly, many of the Principalities and Powers on the dark angel’s side had somehow perverted their knowledge of the elemental forces of creation: electricity, magnetism, gravity... Soon the very pillars of nature were being used by the rebels to assail their opponents. The bolts of lightning, raining fire and blasts of pure force could do no lasting damage to the spiritual bodies of the angels. However, these techniques were used almost as effectively by the fallen ones, who would stun or confuse their foes long enough to move in for the telling blow with the khrev.

Soon, the holy warriors were employing similar tactics to equalize the battle, and thereafter flashing, burning, whirling and crashing examples of destruction and pain could be seen wherever the eye turned. The chaos was reaching its absolute peak. I knew that the Kingdom Itself would be destroyed if this madness were not soon checked. Just then, the Meeting Hall burst asunder, the walls and roof shattering into dust, and the Throne of IaHVeH was laid open for every eye to see.

Amazingly, this only caused a brief pause in the action! The fallen angels had been so blinded by their leader's insistent lies that they had lost all respect for their Father, and would not even show the smallest modicum of reverence. After the barest hesitation, they hurled themselves right back into warfare, and we were forced to defend ourselves once again. But it was not the fact that the Throneroom was exposed that caused the most significant change in the tide of the battle, it was what came *out* of the ruined building.

The three Archangels that had remained within the structure after most of us had departed now sprang forth and joined the battle. Although we could recognize them, they were much changed from when we had last beheld them. Adonai Raphael still had his two wings, as is befitting a Virtue, but nothing else about him was the same. He had a low, thick body, covered with a brown, furry exterior, and two hard, pointed structures proceeded out of his forehead. We did not know what this strange form would represent until a few days later in creation, but when land animals were formed, we saw that the "Healing of El" was represented by the creature that Adam named the Bull. His two horns, however, crackled with the same holy fire that proceeded from the blades of our kherevs, and he used these to attack his enemies, with identical effects.

Adonai Phanael, who changed his name to Uriel (The Fire of El) after this battle had a similar appearance to Raphael, but his face and head was different, as were his feet. Except for the wings, which he retained, he had the appearance of the beast now known as a Lion, and his teeth and claws were ablaze with the same sparkling energy that was radiating from Raphael's horns. The Archangelic Power Camael had taken the form of an Eagle, and was covered from head to knees with brown feathers. Just like his two peers, his beak and claws were shining, effective weapons against the fallen angels. It was in these forms, slightly altered, that your prophets Ezekiel and, more clearly, John, beheld these three Archangels.

It was a timely moment at which they leapt into the fray, for we the loyal Host had almost simultaneously decided to limit our fighting tactics to those afforded us by the blades with which we had been bestowed. The Shekinah-spirit that now filled us all bade us to rely wholly upon the Father's provisions, lest the Kingdom truly be shaken apart by the escalating struggle. In truth, the twisted ends to which the wondrous powers of nature were being employed had seemed extremely crass to my reckoning. At no point during the battle had I stooped to make use of these methods, and it seemed as if one by one all who stood with the Throne had come to the same conclusion.

It is no light thing to seek to manipulate the noble forces with which IaHVeH has empowered the earth, and in these very techniques we saw the seeds of the perversion now known as magic. The more we understood we were misusing these blessings, the more we were revolted by the dark angels' fighting methods, and we sent urgent whispers to our comrades to withhold their hands from joining in the affront. The Might of the Father was sufficient, though, for we yet outnumbered the attackers, and with the three transformed Archangels (who were wreaking havoc among the members of the demonic Host), the two sides were evenly matched.

For the second time in as many days, I was struck to the ground as the thrown kherev of one of the fallen blasted my wings apart. Twisting with pain, I hit the plane hard, and lay there stunned for some time. I rose to my feet slowly, and I saw that the winged bull of Raphael had also joined the ground battle for a time. I made my way towards him, seeking to have my wings healed so that I could join the more fierce conflict that was taking place in the skies above. True to his name, however, the fallen angel Kafziel (Speed of El) darted in and, before I could respond he slashed at my legs, sending me helplessly to my knees.

I managed to put up a feeble defense for some time, but my kherev was soon knocked from my hands by my attacker, and the evil Hashmall drove his sword downward to end my usefulness in the battle. To my vast relief, his blade was checked in its descent, and the flash of light resulting from the two kherevs' striking each other revealed to me a most unlikely savior. Zephon drove his former ally back, and even Kafziel's speed could not save him from the fire that drove the angelic oracle's attack.

I could only watch, mute with a mixture of surprise and horror, as one and then another of the fallen Dominion's wings was sheared off, and then both legs and an arm were opened up by the edge of his opponent's blade. Zephon drove his kherev into Kafziel's chest, and then fell to his knees and sobbed as the pain of rebellion overtook his defeated foe. I dragged my mangled and agony-wracked body over to him and said, "So it *is* possible..."

He turned to me, his emotional distress sublimated by curiosity for a moment, and I said, "You turned back." Zephon nodded slowly and then said to me, "I was weak, but I never struck an angel before now." In all the previous fighting, both that day and the one before, Zephon had stood with the rebels, but he had not been able to bring himself to fight against his former brethren. He had allowed the convictions of his essence to stay his hand, and now, this last ray of hope he had permitted himself to cherish had shown him the way back. All my being rejoiced – Azazel's claims were shown false! The Father would forgive those who were willing to return to Him, if only they would.

I knew it would be more difficult for those who had already taken the sword to task, for Lucifer's deceptions and their own newfound pride would prove a forbidding obstacle, but I knew it could be done, and kneeling beside my prone form was the proof of it. Eager to leave the scene of his violence, Zephon bore me over to Raphael, leaving his victim to twist and shiver in continued suffering. Nothing could be done for the wounded Hashmall at this point.

After I rejoined the battle in the air, a penitent Zephon by my side, I sent a whisper to the other angels, bidding them to spread this joyful news to all the loyal ones. They in turn tried to reason with their adversaries. As far as I know, none chose to turn away from their destructive course. The one who came closest was Zagzagel, for he had a true and loyal friend in the chief Ophan Raziel. The two met in the air as enemies, but even as they fought, the loyal angel pleaded for his friend to cleanse his being of the bitter lies he had been fed.

My sword-arm was too busy to allow my eyes to dwell overly long on this scene, for a somewhat regenerated Cerviel was again making me the particular target of his fury. He was even less of an even match for me this time around, though, and I drove him to the ground with a deep, glowing cut across his shoulders. I turned to face my next enemy, but my attention was momentarily diverted by the appearance of another figure from the remains of the destroyed Throneroom.

El Michael rose slowly into the air, His form ablaze with holy light. His very being sparkled with the essence of the khrev's blade, the glory of the temple, and, now that I noticed it, the light of the orb that still held Adonai Gabriel suspended. The Covering Cherub was in the same spot in which he had remained since the day before. El Michael turned His head from left to right, surveying the scene, and then He shouted a single word, "*IaHVSheVaH!*" and dove down into the conflict with drawn sword. His battle cry, pronounced "*IaHshua,*" means "*IaH saves,*" and was both rebuke to the fallen angels, and glorious encouragement to those who fought at His side.

Invigorated by our Leader's advent, we fought with lightened hearts. Even the dreadful carnage we were forced to witness and participate in could not wholly block out the delight each holy angel felt standing by the second Elohim's side, unified for a common purpose. We had not failed to notice either, that as He uttered that exclamation the voice of the Throne was heard to simultaneously rumble it forth as well. This was the reason El Michael was glowing so brightly. Somehow, even though His being was separate from the Father, He was still in Union!

This wondrous new development threw Lucifer's servants into even deeper chaos than that in which they had already been entrenched, and soon, one by one they fell from the air. I saw that Abaddon and Sammael had managed to shake Israfel and the lion-like Uriel (formerly known as Phanael) for the moment. They flew toward Michael, hoping to make a quick end to our unifying force. They were disappointed, however, if they thought to gain so early a victory. The Elohim held off both these powerful demons quite effectively, but thinking that I could help Him to move on to more pressing matters in a shorter time, I spun towards them and joined their skirmish.

As the duel progressed, El Michael seemed to be moving faster and faster and once, when He did get grazed by Abaddon's blade, the injury sealed itself up of its own accord. Yes, Michael did seem to suffer the effects for a time, but it barely slowed Him down, and soon He was right back to full strength. Soon, several of us were winging nearer to fight in close proximity to our Prince, and many of the fallen also took a particular interest in this little region of conflict.

We quickly became a dense cloud of flashing swords and shining wings. El Michael, in the center, glowed ever brighter, His face and body shining until soon even we His followers could barely look upon Him. At one point Gadriel, a Cherub who had joined his two fallen comrades, got past my defenses and would have cut me out of the sky, but incredibly El Michael barreled between us and took the wound Himself!

Almost too fast for angelic eyes to follow, or angelic minds to conceive, He had seen my peril, swept in to protect me and then darted back to His own opponent, barely missing a beat. As I looked, I saw that He was doing this not only for me, but for all of the loyal Host who had remained close to Him during the battle. And whereas those who were beginning to realize this were filled with wonder, our opponents only registered confusion as their apparently successful attacks were made of none effect. They had been blinded in more ways than one, it seemed, for they could not detect the activities that were being revealed to us; they could not effectively follow the movements of our Prince.

At one point, Azazel flew past in swift pursuit of a retreating Malak, and as he neared our location he shouted out, "Take Michael first!" Abaddon and Sammael looked at each other, obviously whispering, and then the latter dove in and renewed his assault, leaving his partner to hover silently a moment longer, possibly communicating other instructions to someone else. He then joined the battle, and as much as Zephon and I tried to help, their efforts were concentrated solely on Michael, except for deflecting our blows.

As they held him occupied, I saw with horror that the two renegade Archangels, Raguel and Sarakiel, were swooping in from behind. I could barely get out a warning to Michael, but as He turned both the kherevs of His new enemies bit deeply into His chest, and those from whom He had turned away also dealt Him simultaneous blows. The exposed Throne of the Almighty shook with anger as the mighty Archangel fell from the sky. Zephon and I nodded to each other and both threw our blades at the same time, each of us striking one of the newcomers. Without waiting for our weapons to reappear in our hands, we dove down to assist the Elohim.

As we landed we saw that Michael was hurt, but was already healing. His wounds, which would have put even the mightiest of angels permanently out of play for this battle, seemed but a temporary delay for the Prince. He said to Zephon, "Go and find Azazel." Again, the Almighty Throne rumbled His words, announcing his decree to all the warring beings. The oracle bowed and, along with Ithuriel who had just joined us on the ground, sped upwards and off to locate him.

"What shall I do, Lord?" I asked, eager to help. He did not reply, knowing that IaHVeH would echo His words, but instead whispered to me, "Concentrate your efforts on those not already wounded. Even those who have been regenerated since yesterday, leave those be and strive with the others." I nodded, but though not fully understanding His plan, I rushed off along the ground to first find those who had elected to remain on the plane.

I saw a Virtue fighting the powerful Cherub Azrael near the base of a tower. Lasetiel (Bearing with El) did not appear to have the upper hand, for his opponent was encased within a sphere of electricity, preventing the proximity the loyal angel would need to strike an effective blow. Even his thrown attacks were easily deflected. At the same time, he who had learned the evil tricks of the Principalities and Powers would periodically throw the Virtue back against the wall of the tower with a blast of force, hoping to knock the blade from his hand so that *he* could victoriously end the duel.

Lasetiel was stubbornly sticking to his chosen opponent despite the difficulty, and at least he was keeping Azrael on the ground, unable to join the air conflict. Seeing that the holy angel would eventually tire of this, and either leave the demon to escape into the air or have his kherev knocked away, I charged in. Unmindful of the bitter sting of the energy field around Azrael, I ran along the ground and then leapt, using my wings to propel me to even greater speed. My shoulder connected with the surprised Cherub's chest, and I knocked him to the ground.

The energy field flickered out, and he threw me off. In the brief period it took me to recover from the effects of the lightning damage, Azrael had knocked his first opponent away with yet another invisible blow, and then was flying in my direction. As he landed, however, Raphael touched down behind him and gored him with his sparkling horns. Lifting him into the air on them, he tossed the fallen angel aside to land in a glowing, helpless heap. I nodded my thanks to the transformed Archangel and then, deciding I had seen enough of groundwork, took to the air once again.

Seeing and then flying upwards to examine the glowing sphere above me, I hovered briefly in front of Gabriel. The Covering Cherub was curled up into a ball in his strange pain. I had not imagined it was so intense, however, until I saw that glittering tears were streaming down his face, to dissipate on the bottom of the orb upon which they fell. I wanted to go near and place a hand upon him in comfort, and reached forward to do so, but he sensed my approach and, opening his eyes, he looked at me and slowly shook his head. Surely he was in as much agony as if he had been cut himself with one of the enemies' dark blades. I could not understand what was happening to the angel suspended before me.

Eventually, I tore myself away from the strange scene and, after some time of traveling back and forth upon the battlefield, both in the air and upon the ground, I could find no more rebellious angels who had not been damaged by a fiery sword. Oh, the battle was still raging, but as far as I could see, all of those who still fought had already received minor wounds, or had been healed of injuries received the day before.

There was, however, one demon who had not yet tasted the sting of conscience.

As I drifted slowly from one place to another I was suddenly slashed by a passing enemy. This time it was Lucifer himself, still in his twelve-winged form. I received a deep cut to my shoulder, but it was not enough to force me to the earth a third time. I did, however, fall back as the arch demon turned around to swing at me again. Lucifer employed one of the tricks his minions had developed, for as I fought against him, another sword flashed up out of nowhere and cut into my wrist, forcing me to drop my own blade.

Unmindful of the danger, I charged at him unarmed, thinking to wrest his own kherev from his grip, leaving him open for the attack of one of my many nearby allies. This proved to be a mistake, however, for the fallen angel's wings seemed to be formidable weapons of war – as was his fiery blade. Lucifer spun in a circle, and I was knocked back by his twelve feathery limbs, each one striking with the hardness

of steel. I was dazed, but as my powerful opponent was about to rush in for an easy win he was intercepted by a restored Michael.

As the glowing Archangel rose up between us, Azazel fell back and *growled* at Him. I had never before heard a sound of such pure and utter displeasure. As if knowing that El Michael would not be intimidated by his show of force, the fallen angel gave a deep, bitter laugh, and then his wings glowed brightly and folded once again into each other.

When the weapons of Michael and Azazel met, all the angels, pure and corrupt, wounded and whole, let out an involuntary sigh. A groan of an unutterable emotion was drawn forth from our throats, and all the other fighting ceased. Every eye was turned towards the final duel, except for Gabriel, who seemed lost somewhere beyond all of this. The two Cherubim circled each other, and then Michael again dove in with an attack. Lucifer, once more in his original form, appeared much more agile than he had when he had been fighting against me or any other angel. It was well for him that this was so, however, for the Elohim was unbelievably fast Himself.

The kherevs met so frequently that it seemed for a while as if a bell was ringing continuously, and the flashes of light lit up the faces of all the wondering observers. All of Heaven seemed suspended in time as these last blows were struck, deflected and then struck again. With grace never before seen by the universe, these two warriors spun and dodged and fought. Nor was their duel constant, for their battle led them from one end of the skies to the other. Lucifer was struck to the ground, and Michael followed him, pressing His advantage. The battled upon the steps of the ruined Meeting Hall, and then one followed the other again into the air.

We watched mesmerized as Azazel summoned a blast of pure, elemental fire and flung it towards the mighty Archangel who instinctively dodged aside. Seizing the opportunity, His opponent reached in with his blade and knocked the weapon from His hand. As El Michael's kherev spun uselessly away, we watched in horror as a triumphant smile spread over the evil Cherub's face. Simultaneously Lucifer's wounded companions Abaddon and Sammael soared upwards from the entranced crowd and they along with their leader swept in to make a final, concentrated attack upon the Prince of angels.

Just as they approached within striking distance, however, Michael threw His arms wide and spread His wings to their fullest, crying out at the top of His voice, "IaHVShEVaH!" As the rumbling of the word from the Throne also joined His, a blast of brilliant light surrounded the Elohim, and all three of His attackers were flung backwards, falling helplessly toward the ground. But as I watched, the air before Michael's mouth rippled and twisted, as if His word itself was being given form. There, before our very eyes, another shining kherev was formed, this one more brilliant than the one of which He had been deprived.

The Archangel grasped the handle of the blade floating before Him and descended to hover just above Lucifer, who was rapidly regaining his senses. El Michael looked at him with a mixture of sorrow and anger and said, His voice emphasized by the deeper

voice of the Father pealing out from the exposed Throne, “Azazel, my child... Look upon me and take knowledge. I am the glory of the Temple; I AM the Kherev! I AM!”

Before the rumbling of IaHVeH’s voice had faded from the air, the second Elohim dove down, faster than any eye could register, and dealt the fallen Cherub a first and final blow. To our slower senses, it appeared as if El Michael had passed *through* Lucifer, dragging all the majesty of Heaven along with Him, His blade ripping asunder the substance of His enemy’s being.

Lucifer screamed out in agony, his essence laid bare to the eyes of all observers. As we looked on, his wound flowered open, covering his entire being in the shining glow. The glimmering white light deepened to a fiery red, and the shape of the former Archangel melted and stretched, becoming... something else. His twelve wings reappeared, but they were not white and feathered as were ours, but of a leathery, scaly skin. The appendage that was once his head fragmented into seven such organs, each one drawn and twisted into a fearful visage.

The middle head had two horns, and each of the other six had one. There was also a horn on each of his shoulders. His arms and legs thickened and grew fierce dagger-like claws, and from his back now hung a long, heavy tail. All of the Host, holy and fallen, gasped in terror at the apparition, and as the fiery glow faded away, we saw a dull red diadem encircling each of the dragon’s heads.

The beast roared in hellish fury, and with a mighty flap rose into the air to continue its futile rebellion. Michael raised His face to the sky and shouted, “It is finished!” All of Heaven shook at the sound of the Father’s voice shadowing the Archangel’s declaration, and all of a sudden we heard a cry coming from another location above the battlefield.

I turned around to see that the glow surrounding Gabriel had reached its peak brightness, and the Covering Cherub’s eyes were open. He threw his arms and legs out convulsively, and the shining orb vanished with a loud roar. As if he had used the last of his energy, the Archangel plunged lifelessly to earth, his arms and wings hanging limp. Before the collapsed Cherub could even hit the ground, however, all the Kingdom was shaken by yet another cataclysm. I fell back and turned my head to see that the Temple itself was breaking apart!

I quickly veiled my eyes in terror, seeing that even the walls of the Inner Temple were crumbling, and most of the observers hastened to do the same. As the last of the building’s structure crumbled away, we saw the pulsating, fiery cloud of the Shekinah hovering in the air, exposed to the view of all, as was the Father’s Throne. Suddenly, the Mystery of Ages flared to life and expanded at a breathtaking rate, engulfing angel and object alike.

Even through my veil, I was very nearly blinded by the purity of the light all around me. I squinted, I closed my eyes, but all to no avail. My senses were screaming for release as the fiery heat of the Presence swallowed me whole.

Gradually, though, I felt myself growing lighter, the fear and anxiety melting away. I felt as I had just after Michael had healed me from the initial effects of the rebellion, and I found that I could open my eyes.

The wounds I had received from Lucifer's blades faded away, and all around me I could see the loyal angels also rejoicing that they had been restored. This was not the case with those who had chosen rebellion. Every wound, even the tiniest cut and barest scratch flared to life in the light of the glory of IaHVeH. The demons roared in new agony, as their beings were overcome by the pain of their own evil tendencies, their wounds ablaze.

One loyal angel was not at peace, however. Raziel, seeing what the blazing glory of the Shekinah was doing to the fallen angels, hurled himself to the ground and spread his four wings between the source of the glory and Zagzagel's body, futilely hoping to protect his friend from the fiery light. As I watched, mystified, he also threw his head back and cried out, for the blast of spiritual heat tore through his lower wings shielding the prone demon, and singed them away. Raziel collapsed and lay still.

While the holy angels were drifting motionlessly in the air, this was not the case with the inanimate structures of the Kingdom. Except for the Throne, every building, every altar, every tower was being blown apart and then dissolved into the blinding fury of the firestorm. As I looked down, my unbelieving eyes saw the roof torn off of one particular tower and Sh'fiel, who had been hiding within it, was thrown to the earth.

As he lay there, splayed out and dazed, I saw the reason he had kept his wings folded since that occasion I had visited him on the same day as Azrael. The traitorous demon had carved a wicked and now burning cut into Sh'fiel's back. In shame, the Cherub had kept it a secret from me. I knew that when he had been attacked he had not understood the nature of his wound, or of the weapon that had dealt it; but even after I had explained it he had stubbornly kept silent. Why? What explanation could there possibly be? But I knew – Lucifer's persistent deceptions had so confused the tragic angel that he had not known who to trust. Not even me.

And now, what would become of this? I descended and fell to a knee before my friend and said, shouting to be heard over the rushing flames, "Why didn't you tell me?"

He shouted back, his face pinched in pain and fear, "What would you have said, Za'afiel? To trust those I could not trust? To do that which I could not do? Leave me to my misery, I beg you!" But I could do no such thing, and grabbed him by the shoulders. I spun him around and said, "Turn towards the Throne and be healed!"

But he tore himself away from me, spinning me to the ground, and drew his sword, of which he seemed to have just that moment become aware. "Released!" he cried out, and before I could stand up or even cry out, he reversed the weapon in his hands and plunged it deep into his own chest.

I could not make a sound, but my eyes must have grown huge behind my veil. Oh, the utter awful majesty of deception! How could it be that Sh'fiel would cherish these feelings of sheemamon within himself until he could no longer even bear the presence of the Temple's light? My friend sank to his knees as the fire of rebellion burst forth from his wound and enveloped him.

Elsewhere on the battlefield Gabriel stood up slowly, and Michael appeared before him. The two raised their hands to the sky, and the doorway to the Void rippled into existence above them. As if hurled into it by invisible hands, the dragon that was Satan and every demon that burned and screamed in pain was pulled into the Rift... and fell "like lightning" onto the newly-formed globe of earth. It seemed like the process took hours, but when the last of the countless number was gone, and the awful cacophony of screams was finally ended, the Shekinah faded away.

I threw myself upon the ground and wept. The long, painful conflict was finally over, but at what cost? Heaven was almost wholly wrecked, and my best friend was gone.

THE EMPYREAN WAR

AFTERMATH – THE PLAN OF SALVATION

And IaHVeH said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the Heaven to divide the day from the night. And let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years. And let them be for lights in the firmament of the Heaven to give light upon the earth.” We saw the pattern of energy that had been called “light” gathering together in specific points, and these points became huge, glowing balls of fire. We saw that one of these stars in particular was relatively close to the earth, and that a smaller orb of matter was made to float around it in a circle, reflecting the light of this great star.

Descending once again unto the new planet, we looked up and saw that there were other planets like it that drifted in orbits around the star. From the surface of the earth, however, they too appeared like the other light sources, for they reflected the light of the sun, just like the first one we noticed – the moon. There was one planet in particular that interested me. It is the one you now call Venus, and it is often the last star to fade away upon the rising of the sun.

I asked Michael about it, and He said to me, “It is a reminder, Za’afiel, for Azazel also knows its meaning. Behold how this stubborn star, which is not a true star at all, proudly resists the rising sun’s authority over the day.” I nodded in understanding. Many of your people have referred to this planet as the “star of the morning,” and it is to this object that your prophet Isaiah draws your attention in his recorded words to the king of the earth-region of Tyre. Poetically, he refers to both the king and Venus as “Lucifer,” the bearer of light, the name once and still applied to the mightiest of angels.

This was the new lesson of the fourth day, and the fifth and sixth revealed to us even more striking miracles. How we gloried in the animals! We understood more fully the aspects that Uriel, Camael and Raphael represented in their transformed states, perceiving the strength of the lion, the persistence of the bull and the far-seeing perceptiveness of the eagle. Forever would these animals remind humans that IaHVeH was the Lord of the beasts of the ground, both wild and domestic; and He was also king of the creatures of the air.

And speaking of humans! Oh, the day when Adam opened his eyes! When he spoke with us in our own language, communicating so clearly... the wonder, the glory of the intelligence of the Father reflected in this construct of clay and water and air! It would be to you as if a statue had come to life, but even this does not fully reveal to you the amazement we felt. Your race is truly something special.

When the seventh day came, nothing new was created. The Rift was left open, however, and the angels had full, unlimited access to the physical plane. Not that we were ever restricted, or have been since, but the Father invited us on this occasion to worship on the earth, along with man. For three days after the war, we had labored to begin the reconstruction of the Heavenly Kingdom. The Temple was one of the first structures we had started to restore, completing It at the end of the sixth day. And on this holy day, the glory of the Shekinah returned to the Kingdom, and we rejoiced.

The healing of angelic minds would take a little longer, though. For some time, even the beauty of the new creation could not diminish the sorrow I felt over my friend being banished from his eternal home, and his eternal rest. The demons could, for a time thereafter, have access to the Heavenly courts, but such events were trying for Gabriel. You see, the strange condition he had experienced during the war as Covering Cherub was in trying to hold back the force of the Shekinah from instantly destroying all that was unholy. So fiercely had the love and justice of the Union rebelled against the evil before It that it took all of Gabriel's strength and more to keep It in check.

Michael also lent much strength to the Archangel, and this overflow of power had caused him to be suspended in the orb of True Light until the blessed release that came when all the demons had been led to feel the effects of the holy swords. So it was also on the limited occasions when Lucifer and his followers were permitted access; Gabriel needed to shield the arch demon from the glory of the Heavenly atmosphere.

There was a time when Lucifer and his angels did indeed try to repent, and they begged to be cured of their condition. But they were only doing it for fear of the knowledge of the day when the glory of the Shekinah will fill the universe with Its true strength, and then they will meet their final, tragic destruction. There was no true sorrow for the rebellion, and so Michael could not heal them. I still remember the bitter sadness of that day, but I do not like to think of it often.

On that seventh day, Raziel also appeared among us once again. Since the end of the war, he had kept to himself, coming to terms with the loss of his Order brother. He had not sought restoration of his wings from IaHVeH, but clung to the tattered, charred relics as if in tribute to his lost brother. But it appeared that he too had found his rest that day, for he presented himself before Michael and acknowledged the justice and wisdom that led to the expulsion of the demons, including his beloved friend. El Michael smiled upon him and said, "I will not fix your lower wings." I and the others around me looked at Him with confused expressions, but then He continued, "For now you have learned wisdom, Raziel. Now you are near." With that, the Elohim touched the humble Ophan's shoulder, and the two blackened remnants fell off and faded into the ground upon which he knelt. Raziel was now a member of the Order of Cherubim.

The days passed in perfect peace for some time, and I was beginning to hope that perhaps the season of pain and sadness was at last over. Alas, they were only beginning. Realizing that his own fate was sealed, and his case hopeless, the vile

Azazel turned his evil intentions towards Adam and his new wife. He knew that he could no longer stir up trouble upon the Heavenly plane, for we had seen his true form: the monstrous red dragon he had become on the inside. Never more could he hope to deceive an angel. But as for man... sadly your people have fallen prey to the tempter's empty promises.

The day your first parents fell was a sadder day than even the rebellion. Adam and Eve were, to us, like innocent children, and now they had been violated by one much grander in strength, subtlety and wisdom. Oh, I cannot wholly justify the error either, however, for the pair was warned repeatedly by Michael, Gabriel, myself and others. I am sure Zephon had a powerful testimony for them, having been under the shadow of Lucifer's lies himself for a time. Yet they did not heed us, they did not trust our words – much like my lost Sh'fiel. When we saw the scene of Azazel's triumph, we cast our diadems upon the ground in sorrow, yet Michael stood up, and in His kindness, He comforted us all.

“IaHVSHeVaH,” He said to us softly. “Yah saves.” He then opened up the plan of salvation to us. He and the Father had known that Lucifer would never be content anywhere, and would soon stir up trouble for the newly formed creation. Out of mercy, the Elohim had allowed man free choice, for He was true to His promise when He had formed them out of the earth, “Let us create man in our image.” The image of IaHVeH is freedom, and no force on earth or in Heaven can ever take that away from the least one of you.

And yet, what a price would be paid to redeem you! What an infinite sacrifice your freedom would cost the Throne! Beholding that the Elohim love you all this much causes us to love you more. Michael told us that just as man had sinned, and so would need to be destroyed as would Lucifer and his angels in the last days, there could be a substitute made by One who would bear the penalty of death for him. After a brief, thoughtful pause, our beloved Prince declared that He would be the one to pay the ransom.

I was horrified, knowing that Michael was talking about suffering all the agony the wounded demons had felt before the glory of True Light. All the pain of being forcefully expelled from the most Holy place and more would be visited upon the One who would be separated from the Father by the poison of wrong doing. I shook my head and stood up. I cast my diadem at His feet and said, “Let me do this. Let me be the one to suffer in their place.” Michael smiled at all of us kindly, for others were also making similar statements, and throwing their crowns down in sorrow and awe of the One standing before us.

“Only One equal with the Most High can pay the debt. Only an Elohim... only me.” There was sorrow in His eyes, but I saw there also love, and hope. He was looking forward to the days after, when mankind would become like us – knowing good and evil, and yet still holy in the Father's eyes. Michael would become human, would become Yahshua, “Yah saves,” and would walk among you, showing you the principles of Heaven, and finally giving His life to replace yours, canceling the penalty of falling prey to Satan's deceptions.

This is why I have spoken to you; this is why I have been sent. The debt has been paid, human, and the penalty borne. Look back over my words, and see if it is not so – see if everything I have said has not also come to pass in human history as well, with the exception of the final conflict. That too is on your horizon, and I bid you to prepare. I rejoiced in the fact that I spoke early to El Michael, for I was sealed against the final lies of Azazel, and was able to be a real help to those less fortunate.

This is my prayer for you, son of Adam. Speak early with Yahshua, who Michael has become for you. Speak early with your Creator, your Ransom, your Brother. Do not be like Lucifer, so proud of himself he saw no need for help. Do not be like Cerviel, who stood for a time, but later fell away, ruining forever the reputation of his entire Order. Do not be like Zagzagel, so eager to believe a lie. But above all, little brother, do not be like Sh'fiel, to know the truth and yet wait for the last moment. Do not hide your wounds, do not wait for some “better time.” Every man, woman and child I have seen do this breaks my heart anew, for in them I remember my misguided friend.

Oh, I have seen Sh'fiel since, and of all the fallen angels, it is for him I feel the greatest grief. Not merely because he was my friend, but because I still see in him traces of the beauty I once loved. I see that beauty now in you, human, the image of the divine. I will say to you what I said to my friend his last day in Heaven, “Turn towards the Throne and be healed.” If you will do this, if you will join us someday when Israfil sings with joy and Puriel and myself teach the wonders of our Fathers' grace, when Yahshua can rest from His continuing work as your High Priest... If you will come and be with us one day in glory, I promise you, I will be among the very first to run up to you and embrace you. May the glory of the Father be ever with you, but for now, I must be off. There are many, many people who have yet to hear this. For me, it will be a very... busy... day.

A PREVIEW OF BOOK 2:
THE ANTEDILUVIAN WAR

THE ANTEDILUVIAN WAR

INTRODUCCTION - BEKEER (SELECTION)

Fear not.

I am called As'fael (Added by El), and by order of the Throne of Heaven, I have come to speak with you this day. I am a member of the Malakim, the angels. More specifically, I am an Ikari, what you would call a Principality. As the history of the great conflict draws to a close, it has been decreed that more and more light shall be poured out upon the humans, for they are the ones called now to overcome, even as we once overcame, the forces of sin.

They say that the best place to begin is the beginning, but you already know something of this subject. The Cherub Za'afiel has shared with you much knowledge concerning the war that took place before the Heavenly Throne, and because of this I can speak more freely and explain less than he did. My mission now is to continue that record, to let you know the details of what occurred after the fall of Lucifer and just why things are as they are now.

Perhaps there is still a way I can begin at the beginning. I can let you know how I came to be involved in the conflict. I will be far more brief than was Za'afiel about the Heavenly war itself, but it has been some time since you have heard of this matter and it will be good for you to refresh yourself a little.

As a Principality, the chief of my order was once the angel Cerviel. When the Archangelic Cherub Lucifer began to spread his poison among the members of the Host, Cerviel was among the first to resist his efforts. Whenever the rapidly weakening Cherub would speak to us about his fears and concerns, the Chief Principality's voice would be heard in protest. It soon became apparent that Cerviel's resistance began to consume him, however. The rest of us were engaged in learning the applications of the forces ruling the coming physical Creation, but our leader slowly began to divert his focus. His was a crusade to stop the evil from polluting Heaven, even if he would sacrifice himself to do it.

I could understand his desire to silence Azazel, which Lucifer was also called. Wherever the Covering Cherub employed his powerful voice, discomfort and sadness followed in his wake. Every angel felt the venom – every angel felt the pain of the distance that was becoming apparent between the two classes: Lucifer’s followers, and those who wanted nothing to do with his claims.

At the same time, Cerviel’s protests seemed in a way just as painful to hear. His anger at Lucifer made the rest of us horribly uncomfortable, and soon we could not bear to hear him speak against Azazel any more than we could abide the words of the Archangel himself.

One day, just before the conflict truly broke out, Cerviel’s passion overwhelmed him and, leaving his place among us, he flew off to challenge the deceiver directly. The chief Ikari never came back to us.

My main area of specialization has always been electricity. I have always been particularly drawn to that phenomenon; to the study of it, and its applications. It was while engaged in this pursuit that I received a summons by Anael, another high-ranking member of my order. As I arrived at the location to which I had been called, I found him there speaking with Michael, the highest of the Archangels, and the intercessor between the Host and IaH Himself.

The Archangel saw me as I drew near and smiled – a gesture that never fails to draw from us a response, and then He rested His hand gently on Anael’s shoulder before departing. The Principality bowed as El Michael ascended into the air, and then he looked down uncertainly at his left side before turning to face me.

“Cerviel has fallen,” he said to me, a look of sadness on his face. This was an expression the Host was becoming more and more used to seeing, but it was unsettling, and heartbreaking, each time.

Somewhere deep in my essence I was not surprised, but Anael’s sudden words still hit me hard and, unable to speak, I only shook my head in bewilderment.

“El Michael just informed me that I am to take his place.”

“So you will be the chief of the Principalities until this is all straightened out?” I asked, still clinging to the hope that the disaster hanging in the air could be resolved in a peaceful manner. None of us truly had a firm grasp of what it meant for an angel to “fall,” but we were learning day by day.

Anael’s hand moved almost unconsciously to his forehead, and then he said, “Michael has given me quite a lot of troubling news, my friend. Those that have chosen the way of Lucifer... those that have sided with the deceiver... they will have to leave Heaven.”

“Leave Heaven?” I asked. These were new words, and new thoughts, and all I could do was repeat the words Anael had said, trying to attach familiar meanings to them.

“You know about the Creation project, don’t you, As’fael?” I nodded. I knew this was the reason I was studying electricity, though many of the Host were not yet aware of the purpose of their new tasks. “Then let me show you something.”

Anael raised his hand and a small globe of some kind appeared, floating above his palm. In a flash the globe expanded, opening up a passageway to a truly remarkable “place.” Everything about my being was instantly drawn to the indescribable energy that flowed from, through, and into what I saw. “What is it?” I asked, after staring in silence for some time.

“This is the Void, As’fael,” Anael responded. “This is the place where IaH will establish His new creation. This is where the rebellious Host will be sent.”

As Anael closed his hand the Void vanished from my perception, and he said to me, “I am going to do something that will require great trust on your part.”

Trust... this was an unusual word. The meaning was not unusual, but asking for it was almost unknown. When we were assigned to a task by IaH, we “trusted” that this would produce a beautiful new effect in the Kingdom. When the chief of our Order, or one ranked higher than we, summoned us, we “trusted” that the matter was important. This was automatic, however... understood. Nevertheless, I nodded – this day was already turning out to be a very unusual one.

The new Chief Principality made a motion toward his left hip, then I heard a sharp sound fill the air. It was something like a buzzing, something like a whistling, but the next thing I knew, a long line of flame burst forth from Anael’s hand. “Stand still,” he commanded me, and then he stepped forward, striking me in my chest with the ethereal, blazing sword.

There was no real pain when the kherev pierced my being. It was not, however, without effect. I felt a tremendous heat rising in me, sparking along my arms and my wings, and filling me completely. I closed my eyes, yet all I could see was brilliant light. Finally I fell to my knees, unable to contain the overwhelming energy released by what had just occurred.

As I received the insight to let this force pass through me rather than into me, the pressure on my being faded somewhat, and I felt the fire moving towards, and being concentrated in, my right hand. I grasped an object that I perceived to have appeared in my half-open palm, and a blade of fiery light shot out from it, similar in appearance to that with which Anael had smitten me.

As I opened my eyes, I found myself better able to control the dis-ease that had been coursing through my being since I had first become aware of the conflict in Heaven. New insight flooded my mind, and I became aware, as I had never been before, of the sorrow I had been feeling... and I wept. I also felt an unusual pressure in my forehead, but I was

not to understand that until later on. Anael's kherev faded, and he stored the weapon in a sheath by his hip, and then he placed a fraternal hand on my shoulder.

"You are reborn in fire, As'fael," the Principality said, and he raised me to my feet. "Now you can feel, and understand, the pain of all Creation; and now you can begin to be equipped for the days ahead." The new Chief of my Order explained to me the use of my sword and the great responsibility of my opened eyes. With great solemnity I thought on these things.

"How many angels already know their swords?" I asked Anael, after I understood the situation a little better. "Very few," he replied. "All will learn before the end, but IaH will decide which of us will teach the others, and which of them will be able to receive it first." He then looked downcast again, and he continued, "Among Azazel's friends there are also many who have kherevs. For those whose eyes are opened, yet whose places are still with him... who can say what will become of them?"

At the end of that week we gathered for our Meeting, to worship IaH and to see our companions, many of whom had been busy in various parts of the Kingdom for several days. Among those whom I had not seen for almost the entire week were the Virtues Koliel (Voice of El) and Tarfiel (Nourished by El), and the Dominion Tahariel (Purity of El). These were three of my dearest friends, and we were always pleased when the tasks to which we were assigned placed us within close range of each other.

After Matmoniel had led us through a time of worship and the Seraphim, led by Israfel and Petahel, had graced us with a song of immense beauty, the Cherub Puriel appeared before the assembled Host to speak. He told us about the Creation project— and all, including Lucifer, were in attendance to hear. After he explained to us some of the details of the new race, mankind, he created a gigantic globe of energy above the Throne, much larger than the one Anael had shown me, and then took us all with him into the Void.

The Cherubim in general may have a larger view of things than we Principalities do, but I saw all I could contain! The energy was so raw, so pure, so beautiful; and throughout the chaotic majesty of it, there was a single ribbon of order, and it was IaH... and He was preparing it for something amazing.

There were tears of joy in every eye as we returned to the Heavenly plane... Our Father is limitless in His ability to bring us happiness.

As the Meeting concluded some time thereafter, we all left with new knowledge – we were all aware of how to transfer ourselves at will into the Void, and we all had a profound sense of worth – knowing that we were to have a hand in bringing all those wonderful promises into being. As we all prepared ourselves for the coming week of labors, Tarfiel, Koliel, Tahariel, and myself discussed the matter in excited tones.

For my part, I could not refrain from telling them about my conversation with Anael.

I told them of Cerviel joining with Lucifer's growing rebellion, and of the new Chief Ikari's concerns. I told them about him striking me with the khrev, and I showed them all my own sparkling blade. Koliel and Tahariel looked at the weapon with wonder, and I could see their minds working to understand... but Tarfiel viewed the blazing object as if he'd seen it before, and with a certain emotion that I had not previously encountered.

I wondered though; how was it that I could understand the nature of the rebellion so clearly, and they could not? How was it that I received my own blade so readily, yet I knew deep in my essence that if I were to force this knowledge on them now, it would do more harm than good? Anael had called me specifically for some reason, and I trusted that he, or Michael, or whosoever had inspired him to do so, knew what he was doing.